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ABSTRACT

This practicum aimed to facilitate development and implementation of recommended practices by an early childhood special education team working with a University Affiliated Program (UAP). A site development project was being developed in response to the recognition by UAP center staff that their activities were not sufficient in helping early childhood programs implement recommended practices. The practicum was designed to close four gaps that had been identified in the site development project: (1) the absence of an organizing structure; (2) the need to gather information about the site team; (3) the need to identify and implement effective staff development strategies; and (4) the need to identify barriers to implementation of recommended practices. A strategic plan was developed by the project team, including a vision, values, operating principles, goal, objectives, and time line of activities. Although delays impacted project implementation, a strategic plan was developed, a self-study by the site team was nearly completed, procedures and forms for selecting staff development strategies were drafted but not tested, and barriers to implementation of recommended practices were identified but plans to resolve them had not yet been made. Appendices contain various practicum administration materials. (Contains approximately 65 references.) (JDD)

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Strategic Planning and Implementation of a Project that Supports an Early Childhood Special Education Team in Their Implementation of Recommended Practices

by

Alice Frazeur Cross

Cluster 35

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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7/1/94
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ABSTRACT

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This practicum facilitated the development and implementation of a project the purpose of which was implementation of recommended practices by an early childhood special education team. The practicum was designed to close four gaps in the project: the absence of an organizing structure, the need to gather information about the site team, the need to identify and implement effective staff development strategies, and the need to identify barriers to implementation of recommended practices.

A strategic plan was developed by the project team using computer-augmented teamwork. The team developed a vision, values, operating principles, a goal and objectives, and a time line with activities. Implementation of the project incorporated completion of a self-study process by the site team and their development of an action plan for training and technical assistance activities. Systematic procedures were developed to guide the collaborative decision-making process for selecting and implementing staff development strategies. A process was defined for identifying and resolving barriers.

The gaps in the project were closed and progress in implementing recommended practices was made by the site team. Although delays impacted project implementation, the strategic plan was developed, the self-study process was nearly completed, procedures and documenting forms for selecting staff development strategies were drafted but untested, and barriers were identified but plans to resolve them had not yet been made. The site development project continued after the practicum period.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Work and Project Settings, Communities, and Stakeholders

Work Setting

The work setting of the writer is a federally-funded university affiliated program (U.A.P.). The purpose of the U.A.P. is to provide a leadership role in promoting the independence and productivity of people with developmental disabilities and their integration and inclusion into the community (Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 1994). The leadership role of the U.A.P. is implemented through community service activities, interdisciplinary preservice personnel preparation, and dissemination of information and research. The range of activities provided by the U.A.P. includes training, technical assistance, program development, research, and state-of-the-art direct services to individuals and their families, community programs, schools, and businesses. The U.A.P. is organized into centers based on age of the population served, such as young children, and by program function, such as information dissemination.

One U.A.P. center addresses the needs of young children birth through age eight, with or at risk for disabilities, and their families. Activities of the U.A.P. center are geared primarily to programs whose staff work directly with young children and their families, and to communities that seek to improve services and the quality of life for young children. The activities are geared secondarily to individuals who work directly with young children and their families. The center is staffed by an interdisciplinary team. The expertise of team members includes early childhood

education, special education, speech-language pathology, adapted physical education, physical therapy, and family support.

The U.A.P. center has been awarded state Department of Education (D.O.E.) grants since 1986 for planning and implementing activities that support state-wide public school implementation of early childhood special education. The activities have been designed to meet the needs of many people who work with young children with disabilities including families, teaching staff, related services personnel, and administrators. The center has used a variety of activities to support early childhood special education, including technical assistance to programs and individuals, development and publication of resource materials, provision of workshops, summer institutes, and forums, maintaining a circulating collection of early childhood special education literature and resource materials, and development and dissemination of videos.

One component of the D.O.E. grant focuses on strengthening early childhood special education programs through program development. The writer's practicum addressed that grant activity. As such, the practicum involved the U.A.P. center as the work setting and an elementary school as the project setting.

Community of the Work Setting

The U.A.P. is associated with a university located in a small Midwest city. Reports from the 1990 census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992a, 1992b) offer a variety of data regarding the city and county. The county is predominantly rural and has a population of about 108,978. The county per capita income was less than the state average. The percentage of individuals in the county whose 1989 income was below poverty, was 19.4 percent - higher than the state average. The university and

the city influence each other in several ways. The university has a campus enrollment of about 30,000 which greatly increases the 54,580 people who identify the city as their permanent residence. While the university is a major employer in the area, city businesses hire many students. The number of people in the county 25 years of age and older, who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, was 32.9 percent, more than double the percentage of the state as a whole. The high number of people in the county with college degrees is probably the result of graduates remaining in the community. The students from the university increase the racial and cultural diversity of the county. While 94.3 percent of people in the county are white, students who attend the university are of all races and national and international origins.

Project Site

The practicum involved an early childhood special education program from an elementary school located in a county next to that of the U.A.P. The elementary school draws children from across the county. It had a December 1993 child count of 1,047 children. The school corporation meets the needs of students with disabilities through its membership in a special education cooperative. By participating in the cooperative the school has access to related service therapists and administrative coordinators. Participants in the project were identified by the early childhood staff and school administrators. Members of the site team included the preschool teacher, a teaching assistant, kindergarten teacher, inclusion resource teacher for kindergarten classes, a grandparent of a preschool child, related service staff including two speech-language pathologists, a physical therapist, a social worker, the assistant principal, and principal. When the practicum concluded there were 16 three- to six-year-old children with disabilities enrolled between the morning and afternoon preschool sessions.

Community of the Project Site

The site for the project is an elementary school located in a small town about twenty miles from the U.A.P. According to 1990 census data (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992a, 1992b), the town has a population of 2,609 people. The county is rural with a population of 17,281 of which 99.3 percent are white. The 1989 per capita income in the county was less than the state average and 13.6 percent of the population was below poverty level. Table 1 provides a comparison of various census data for the state, county of the work setting, and county of the project site.

Table 1

Census Characteristics of the State, County of the U.A.P., and County of the Project Site

CENSUS CHARACTERISTIC	STATE	COUNTY OF U.A.P.	COUNTY OF SITE
Total Population	5,544,159	108,978	17,281
Race - Percent Distribution			
White	90.6	94.3	99.3
Black	7.8	2.6	.3
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	.2	.2	.3
Asian or Pacific Islander	.7	2.5	.1
Other	.7	.4	-
Per Capita Income in 1989	13,149	12,017	10,572
Income below Poverty Level in 1989 - Percent Distribution	10.7	19.4	13.6
Education of People 25 Years and Older - Percent Distribution			
High School Graduate or Higher	75.6	82.1	66.3
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	15.6	32.9	7.1

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people and groups who have an interest in the activities or might be affected by them in some way. Involving stakeholders with their various strengths, needs, and interests has profound implications on project processes and outcomes (Winton, McWilliam, Harrison, Owen, & Bailey, 1992). The involvement of stakeholders ranged from active participation in planning and implementation to nonparticipatory observation of the project with varying degrees of interest. Stakeholders for this project included the staff, families, and children of the school, the U.A.P., and the center.

The project was most important to those who were directly involved with children. Each child has the right to receive a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. Families want their children to have the best education and school experiences, and have the right to be involved in decisions regarding their children's education. Eleven staff and family members of the project site made individual and joint decisions to strengthen their early childhood special education program and to implement recommended practices. They elected to use support provided by the center to help them in the process.

Schools must provide each child with an education in the least restrictive environment. There are district policies and programs that support provision of education for each child with disabilities, as required by federal and state mandates. One required component of the policies is a comprehensive system of professional development (C.S.P.D.). Such a system supports improvement in the quality of education practices. The activities of this project helped to meet that need.

The U.A.P. and the center have a stake in demonstrating that site development is an effective approach to staff development. Staff of the center strongly believe that teaching and related services personnel are most likely to strengthen their practices if their professional development activities are motivated by their own needs and interests.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is a site coordinator and research associate at the U.A.P.'s center for young children. The site coordinator position is funded through the contract from the state D.O.E. Division of Special Education. One of the writer's responsibilities as site coordinator has been to facilitate the demonstration of recommended practices at a selected site. Other activities of the site coordinator include provision of training and technical assistance to early childhood teams when requested. As a research associate, the writer assists in the documentation and evaluation of various activities implemented by the center. The writer contributes her education and work experiences in early education and care of children birth through age eight, and also her knowledge of program development and quality improvement, gained in her previous practicum and work experiences.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Background of the Problem

History of the problem.

Public Law 99-457, enacted in 1986, guaranteed special education programs and related services for children ages three through five with disabilities. The legislation required each state to implement the components of early childhood special education that ensure the education needs of young children with disabilities were being addressed. This became the responsibility of the public school system.

Change in education practice has been necessary, from the level of the state public school system to individual teachers and teaching assistants. Providing early childhood special education is more than the quantitative addition of children to the system. It is qualitatively different from elementary education as well. Different practices are needed for educating children ages three through five, due to their unique developmental characteristics. As such, it is the responsibility of the state D.O.E. to ensure that school personnel have the requisite skills and knowledge. One way this occurs is through the state's comprehensive system of professional development (C.S.P.D.). The C.S.P.D. plans describe the projects and activities by which the state has facilitated the development of early childhood special education within the context of the public school system. Many projects and activities have been funded by the state and implemented by the U.A.P. and institutions of higher education.

Since enactment of the law, the U.A.P. center has implemented professional development projects and activities throughout the state. The purpose of the center's projects and activities for the state has been to provide the information, technical assistance, training, and forums that help teaching staff, related services personnel, and administrators implement their programs in ways that are appropriate for young children and their families and meet federal and state law. Information in video and literature formats is disseminated in response to individual requests. Technical assistance usually takes the form of on-site consultation to an individual classroom. Training takes place through workshops and conference sessions that focus on a single topic. The topics are usually presented only once or twice a year. Forums provide an opportunity for early childhood special education coordinators to network, receive current updates from the D.O.E., and hear about early childhood special education program activities taking place around the state.

During recent years, the U.A.P. center staff began to recognize that the projects and activities they were carrying out were not sufficient for helping early childhood programs implement recommended practices. This recognition came from four sources. First, the literature on inservice education and staff development showed that training workshops were not an effective method of changing the educational practices. Second, center staff felt that their technical assistance visits to programs had not changed practices. They observed a variety of barriers existing in programs that inhibited change. In addition, repeated technical assistance requests from some programs related to particular components of early childhood special education, indicated staff from those programs had been unable to incorporate suggestions made by a member of the U.A.P. center. Third, early childhood special education

practitioners indicated a desire to observe recommended practices being successfully carried out. Fourth, documented evidence showed that gaps existed in the provision of early childhood special education for young children and their families. Such evidence suggested that another approach was needed to help early childhood programs carry out recommended practices.

The U.A.P. center began to conceptualize a project that would (a) promote implementation of recommended practices by staff of an early childhood special education program and (b) demonstrate implementation of recommended practices to other practitioners in the field. The project was proposed to the state D.O.E. and funding requested. Funding was approved for the 1992-1993 fiscal year as part of the U.A.P. center's funding package for supporting the development of early childhood special education within the state.

The project was initiated in the fall of 1992. The first step of the process was hiring a site coordinator who would facilitate the relationship with the site, recognize when the skills of one or more members of the center was needed, keep the development process moving forward, and ensure that appropriate documentation and evaluation were occurring. The first attempt to recruit and hire a site coordinator was unsuccessful. The writer was hired as the result of the second attempt and began employment in the spring of 1993.

Project development began during the summer of 1993 with funding renewed for the 1993-1994 fiscal year. The development process began with a series of meetings that had the following purposes. First, the meetings gave members of the center team an opportunity to share the ideas each had about the purpose and process of the project. Second, the meetings oriented the writer, as a new site

coordinator, to the project by providing background information and the ideas that had been previously been developed. It also allowed the writer to share her knowledge of inservice strategies and program development. Third, the meetings started the development of a common vision of the project.

It was also during the summer of 1993 that the writer began the process of identifying a work-related problem to be addressed in her major practicum project. Conversations between the writer, the coordinator of the project (writer's supervisor) and the director of the U.A.P. resulted in the decision that the site development project would be the focus of the writer's practicum. The method used to define the problem involved two steps: (a) asking who, what, when, where, and how questions about the current situation, and (b) identifying gaps in the development of the project.

Current situation related to defining the problem.

The first question asked about the current situation was "Who will be carrying out the project?". The center promotes the concept of teaming and it had been decided that a team-to-team approach would be used. The interdisciplinary team from the U.A.P. center was composed of staff members with expertise in early childhood education, special education, speech-language pathology, adapted physical education, and family support. Incorporation of team members in individual activities would be facilitated by the site coordinator.

The next question asked "What was recommended practice?". It was recognized that recommended practice for implementing programs for young children had been determined by practitioners and researchers in the fields of early childhood education and early childhood special education. The practices had been documented in books such as *DEC Recommended Practices: Indicators of Quality in Programs for*

Infants and Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families (DEC Task Force on Recommended Practices, 1993) and *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* (Bredekamp, 1986). These books contained definitions and indicators of implementation for each practice.

The "when" question asked "When would the project begin and end?". It was expected that the U.A.P. center team would begin working with a school team when a site was confirmed and the staff was ready for the center team to introduce the project. Although an ending point was not projected, it was assumed that the project would require more than one year to complete. This was based on two factors. First, before recommended practices could be demonstrated to others, they needed to be carried out within the early childhood special education program. Preliminary identification of the site had taken place and it was recognized that the site staff were not fully implementing recommended practices. This was confirmed by observations of the school corporation's preschool coordinator and special education administrator. Second, the change from awareness of a recommended practice to the point where the practice is routinely incorporated, takes time for an individual. Moving a team to that point could take two or more years. Thus, it was recognized that this practicum project would be the first phase of a multiyear project.

The "where" question asked "Where would the project be carried out?". Steps had been taken to identify an early childhood special education program that would serve as a site for the project. The coordinator of the center's projects funded by D.O.E. proposed implementing the project with one of the early childhood special education programs of the local school corporation. There has been a history of cooperation and mutual benefits between the school corporation and the U.A.P. In

addition, the preschool coordinator of the special education cooperative had spent a year of sabbatical working at the U.A.P. center. These experiences promoted a relationship of trust. It also increased the likelihood that the uncertainties and learning processes taking place during early project development would not cause great concern or mistrust among school personnel. Conversations regarding a site had taken place between the preschool coordinator, school corporation administrators, and the project coordinator. Preliminary identification of an early childhood special education program took place using criteria that included a demonstrated capability to carry out recommended practices, an interest in being a site, and a willingness to work with a site development team and to demonstrate recommended practices to personnel of other schools in the state.

The last question asked about the current situation was "Why was site development chosen as the method to facilitate demonstration of recommended practices?". Alternate methods included implementation of a model program and development of a laboratory school. The funding from the state was designated for site development, not the alternatives. In addition, both the model program and laboratory school would have involved the U.A.P. center staff in providing services directly to children. The use of center staff in direct service was no longer an operating approach of the U.A.P. Further more, neither a laboratory school nor model program would provide the real world setting that early childhood special education teams wanted to observe. Those settings would limit the extent to which teaching staff would find the practices compatible with their current beliefs and practices. As a result, the center's efforts for supporting early childhood special education teams in their

implementation of recommended practices, needed to take place in an existing early childhood special education setting.

Gaps in project development.

The next step in defining the problem to be addressed in this practicum involved identifying gaps in the project development that had already taken place. Superficially, it appeared that much of the project had been decided. Further examination revealed four major gaps related to project design, the site and the early childhood special education team, strategies for supporting recommended practices, and barriers to implementing recommended practices.

The first gap was in the area of project design. Although the project had been funded, it was just at the idea stage. Minimal project development had taken place before the practicum. There was no organization, structure, or delineated plan. This gap was believed to be a benefit and a deficit. As a benefit, both the U.A.P. center team and the school team would to contribute to the development of the project. As a deficit, it was anticipated that the absence of organization would create a high level of anxiety, since participants would not know what their roles and activities would be for the project.

Second, the strategies which the U.A.P. center team expected to use with the school team, had not been identified. The center team had not developed a document describing possible strategies, their benefits or deficits, or how they would be used. No process had been developed that would offer strategy choices to the school team nor was there any mechanism to ensure consideration of the school team's preferences, time, finances, staffing patterns, or administration opinions.

Third, there was insufficient information about the interests, strengths, and needs of the school team because confirmation of the site had not taken place. Information about the interests, strengths, and needs of the school team was considered necessary for two reasons. First, an important component of working with a school team is development of trust and open communication. Shared knowledge of interests, strengths, and needs promotes trust and open communication. This, in turn, increases acceptance and adoption of recommended practices. Second, background information was considered essential for identifying and implementing strategies that would facilitate implementation of recommended practices by the school team.

The fourth gap concerned identification of barriers to recommended practices. The center team knew there could be many reasons why recommended practices were not being carried out in the anticipated site. Barriers had been described by early childhood special education personnel and administrators at training and technical assistance events implemented by U.A.P. center staff throughout the state. Some barriers were specific to a particular classroom, others were reported by personnel from several school districts. One barrier was apparent in the school corporation where the project was to be implemented. The school corporation was preparing to implement inclusion in at least one classroom per grade in each school. The barrier was a prevailing belief among general education teachers that children with disabilities would be "dumped" in their classrooms with no support for the staff. The U.A.P. center team expected other barriers to appear during implementation of the project.

In summary, it was felt that recommended practices of early childhood special education would not be effectively demonstrated to practitioners until four gaps in the project were addressed. The project needed to be planned. Effective strategies

needed to be identified in some way. Information needed to be collected about the early childhood special education team and their program. Barriers to the implementation of recommended practices needed to be identified.

Definition of the Problem

The problem was defined after considering the history of the situation, the current situation and the gaps in project development. The problem addressed in this practicum was the need to develop and implement a project that would support implementation of recommended practices by an early childhood special education team. It was felt that this project had the potential to create a strong base of experience, strategies, and knowledge that would attract and support other school teams in their adoption of recommended practices of early childhood special education.

Problem Documentation

The existence of the problem was validated by evidence from sources such as the funding proposal presented to the state D.O.E., statements from the project coordinator, annual reports of the center and the school corporation, a report of technical assistance activities, and news reports. The evidence contributed to the writer's understanding of the problem.

Evidence about the status of the project was sought from a number of sources. Reports and documents were reviewed. Questions were asked of center staff. The center's funding proposal for the project specified that center staff and consultants would facilitate the development of a model of early childhood special education for young children with disabilities. The proposal did not specify objectives or the strategies by which it would be accomplished. No other documents were found that

described the project, its purpose, or implementation methods. Discussion with the project coordinator confirmed that the project was at the idea stage and as a result, there was no vision statement, mission, rationale, or action plan.

A search was made to determine the training and technical assistance strategies carried out by center staff to facilitate adoption of recommended practices of early childhood special education and why they had been used. It was anticipated that such strategies would form the basis of site development activities. The 1990-1991 and 1991-1992 annual reports of the U.A.P. center revealed that on-site consultation, organized training activities, and resource identification were provided as part of the technical assistance. The topics of the organized training activities and those covered during on-site consultation were listed. The 1990-1991 annual report contained an evaluation and review of the technical assistance carried out during that year (see Appendix A). The evaluation was conducted by interviewing representatives of five schools at which the center had provided technical assistance. The report included a list of ways respondents had found technical assistance to be helpful, although only two program changes were identified as resulting from the center's technical assistance efforts. Neither annual report contained information regarding reasons strategies had been selected. An additional report, the 1992-1993 summary of technical assistance provided by the center, contained no information about the particular strategies, such as observation and feedback, used during on-site consultation.

An effort was made to locate information about the early childhood staff and the site, the school corporation, and the special education cooperative. Such information was considered essential to identification of strategies that would encourage

implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education. Two sources were identified - the annual report of the school corporation and the information reported by the preschool coordinator of the special education cooperative. The 1992-1993 annual report of the school corporation showed that six full-day preschool classrooms were provided among four schools of the special education cooperative. The preschool coordinator reported that provision of early childhood special education was being changed for the 1993-1994 school year to four schools with one classroom each, running morning and afternoon sessions. The reduction in the number of hours provided to each child was the result of a funding decision and the increasing numbers of children. Staffing decisions were not expected until the start of the school year, although three teachers had opted to move to other grades. It was uncertain which teacher would be at which site, and another early childhood special education teacher needed to be hired. In addition, it was not known which teaching assistant would be paired with each teacher. Though preliminary identification of a classroom had taken place, there had been no confirmation. Because of the classroom changes and the resulting shortage of information about participants, strategies for facilitating implementation of recommended practices had not been identified.

The identification and recommendation of "best" educational practices are often accompanied by revelation of barriers to their adoption. One aspect of recommended practice is placement of children in the least restrictive environment. This usually means inclusive settings. The local newspaper (Rota, 1993, May 11) reported the school board's intent to carry out inclusion in all of the district's elementary schools in the fall of 1993. Following the decision, a radio news broadcast reported that a petition

had been signed by 175 of approximately 250 elementary teachers of the corporation. It said that signers had concerns about the manner in which inclusion would be implemented in community schools. The news report further said that teachers had fears about increased workloads. These reports suggested that attitudes could be a barrier to implementing recommended practices. Identification of other barriers was anticipated during implementation of the project.

Causative Analysis

The problem addressed in this practicum was the need to develop and carry out a project that would support implementation of recommended practices by an early childhood special education team. Gaps had been identified in the project planning and development that had previously taken place. The project needed to be planned. Effective strategies needed to be identified in some way. Information needed to be collected about the early childhood special education team and their program. Barriers to implementing recommended practices needed to be determined. Evidence identified at the beginning of the practicum suggested that multiple, interactive factors at both state and local levels of the education system and within the center's activities had contributed to the situation.

One factor contributing to the need for a project supporting implementation of recommended practices, had been identified as the public school's recent role in providing education for young children with disabilities. Mandated implementation of early childhood special education began July 1, 1991. Although the D.O.E., U.A.P. center, and institutions of higher education had been implementing training events, technical assistance projects, and other activities since 1986, the state education

system and its schools were still developing the various system and organizational structures needed for providing early childhood special education in the manner described in state and federal law. In addition, most teaching staff, related services personnel, and administrators had not yet implemented recommended practices on a daily basis or across the school year. This was substantiated by the 1991-1992 annual report of the U.A.P. center that said most of the school systems in the state did not have adequately trained early childhood special education personnel. At that time a systems-approach was being developed to address the need. The U.A.P. center's site development project had been conceptualized as one mechanism that would contribute to resolution of the need for adequately trained personnel.

The project development process used by the U.A.P. center contributed to the status of the project. The site development project had been funded as part of a larger, multiyear project the U.A.P. center was carrying out for the state D.O.E. The annual funding process for renewing the larger project did not include responding to a disseminated request for proposals. Instead, the center proposed project activities in response to perceived needs of the early childhood special education field and collaborated with the D.O.E. related to what, when, where, and how projects would be carried out. A consequence of this approach was that plans had not been developed for the site development project. It had been anticipated that plans would be finalized when the funding and plans for the larger project were completed. Other factors contributing to the status of the project were changes in the center's administration and the efforts to fund and employ a site coordinator.

Another causative factor was related to changes taking place in the field of staff development and early childhood special education. Two legislated activities of the

U.A.P. have been identified as the translation of research findings into practice and the provision of training and technical assistance. U.A.P. staff were expected to use effective, state-of-the-art strategies during these activities. The research literature on staff development showed that more effective inservice and training methods were available than were being used by the center. It was also recognized that changes in early childhood special education, such as developmentally appropriate practice, required different training strategies. One technical assistance activity requested by early childhood special education staff was an opportunity to observe staff implementing recommended practices. Because most young children in the state who had disabilities in February 1993 were being served in self-contained settings (Blumberg Center, 1993) and because most schools only had one preschool classroom, teaching and related services personnel were not getting the opportunity to observe senior early childhood special education staff in action. As a result, modifications in the center's approach to training and technical assistance were needed.

A funding decision of the local school corporation was considered a factor in the amount of information about the school team that was available to the U.A.P. center. Information regarding the characteristics, interests, strengths, and needs of the early childhood special education team was considered important to the selection of strategies to be used to facilitate the school team's implementation of recommended practices. The school corporation had served young children with disabilities since 1978. It was initially funded by a four year federal grant and later through state and local funding. In recent years, there had been an increase in the number of children identified for services and also changes in funding. During spring 1993, school budget

issues forced recognition of the need to reduce costs. The corporation and special education cooperative decided to provide the minimum number of hours of preschool special education required by federal legislation. This action was expected to change policies, procedures, schedules, staffing, and classroom locations. Although a preliminary decision had been reached regarding which site would participate in the site development project, a final decision was not expected until the school year began. As it turned out, the team of the anticipated site opted to participate in a different center project. Another team from the local special education cooperative requested the opportunity to participate. This change is described in the section titled Report of Action Taken, in Chapter IV, Solution Strategy.

The impact of barriers on implementation of recommended practices was considered another causative factor in the status of the project. One barrier had been identified as the traditional patterns of participation in staff development activities in which general education teachers do not often attend workshops on special education topics. Similarly, most of the attendees at special education conferences and workshops have been special education teachers and administrators. This pattern was confirmed by attendance lists from events provided by the U.A.P. center. Therefore, the writer had suggested that opportunities and preferences for particular types of training events could have been construed as a barrier to implementation of recommended practices. The writer had also suggested in her proposal that the heated debate related to implementation of inclusion in the local school corporation could reflect a school atmosphere in which a site development project supporting implementation of recommended practices would not be supported.

The writer now recognizes that the identified barriers were not causative factors of the gaps in the development of the project. The debate related to inclusion was evidence that barriers needed to be identified during project development and implementation, but it was not a causative factor.

Relationship to the Literature

The literature review covered education, special education, teacher education, staff development, organizational change, and change-agent literature. Information was provided about the problem and its causes, including the increasing numbers of preschool children with disabilities, the legislated requirements for maintaining a trained and effective teacher work, the trends in providing education to children with disabilities, the barriers in implementing inclusive programs for preschool children, and problems associated with program and individual development.

Justification for Addressing the Problem

Children are the most important justification for addressing the problem. The number of children in the nation who receive preschool special education services, increased from 363,000 in the 1986-1987 school year to 422,000 for the 1989-1990 school year (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1992). There are several reasons why the number of young children in preschool special education has risen. One reason is the increasing number of babies with low birth weights. Low birth weight greatly increases a baby's risk for developing disabilities (Brown & Brown, 1993; Pearl, 1993). Another reason is the effect of the law mandating Child Find activities. Development of the system for identifying young children with or at risk for disabilities,

has substantially increased the number of children entering early childhood special education programs.

Congress and the federal government have played a critical role in ensuring that educational needs of young children are met. Several mandates have provided the legal impetus to generate change in the educational system.

The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 specifies state responsibility for providing education for young children with disabilities. With mandated early childhood special education required by July 1, 1991 most states are now at the point of developing coordination between the various components of their systems, making funding strategies work, and ensuring that all legal requirements are met (Barnett & Frede, 1993).

Another mandate, part of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, requires that each child's education be provided in the least restrictive environment. The least restrictive environment is usually interpreted as the opportunity for children with disabilities to be included in regular education classes with their peers. This interpretation has caused a paradigm shift in state and local education systems (Peck, 1993). Schools have begun carrying out strategies for meeting this responsibility in ways such as offering placements in community child care settings, providing early education for young children without disabilities to create inclusive classrooms, and implementing extended-day kindergarten programs that preschool children regularly visit (Hanson & Widerstrom, 1993). Carrying out this aspect of education for young children has represented a challenge to state and local education systems. Reynolds (1990) states, "the history of special education can be summarized in two words: *progressive inclusion*. . . . [which] suggests that all teachers need to be

prepared to accommodate disabled students in regular school environments and that special education teachers need to be prepared for consultation and teaming functions, as well as for direct teaching functions" (pp. 424-425).

The development and implementation of education systems that meet the needs of young children in inclusive settings, require a trained, effective workforce of teaching staff. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 requires a comprehensive system of personnel development, including:

> (i) a system for the continuing education of regular and special education and related services personnel; (ii) procedures for acquiring and disseminating to teachers, administrators, and related services personnel significant knowledge derived from education research and other resources; (iii) procedures for adopting, where appropriate, promising practices, materials, and technology, proven effective through research and demonstration.

Educating young children with disabilities within the public school system is a recent development. Administrators, related services personnel, and teaching staff are still developing the components of early childhood special education programs. Teaching and related services staff must have support to assist their adoption of recommended practices. There is a clear requirement for effective, well-organized systems of delivering staff development related to recommended practices in early childhood special education.

Barriers to Implementation of Required and/or Recommended Practices

The existence of federal and state legislation is not enough to ensure implementation of quality early childhood special education programs for young children and their families. The belief that legislation should be sufficient, suggests

that legislation will always result in appropriate and effective policies that are promptly and accurately carried out by practitioners. This is a traditional mechanistic perspective. "A central assumption of this approach to implementation is that knowledge and influence flow unidirectionally from policy generating sectors of a bureaucracy to policy implementing sectors" (Peck, 1993, p. 4). There are many other factors involved in translating legislative intent and recommended practices into day-to-day implementation. Often these factors become barriers to change.

Large scale educational, social, and policy forces influence preschool integration (Strain & Smith, 1993). Strain and Smith identify the forces as educational reform and the need to compete in world markets, the unionization and protectionism of educational professionals, the preference for site-based management, the expanded role of parents in schooling, and unprecedented fiscal problems. These forces influence early education settings, school districts, and state and federal departments of education. Large scale forces can have a major impact, either positively or negatively, on the implementation of integration, depending on the interpretation of the forces and the circumstances and experiences of the individuals who are involved.

Since 1991, there has been an increase in the number of articles reporting on barriers to implementing recommended practices in early childhood special education. One of the most important studies of barriers was carried out by Smith and Rose (1991). They conducted a ten-state survey seeking information from parents and representatives of state education agencies, Interagency Coordinating Councils with a birth to five focus, regional and local Head Starts, and child care programs. The survey asked respondents to comment about their perceptions of policies that could be disincentives to carrying out the least restrictive environment mandate.

Respondents most frequently cited policy categories related program and personnel standards, eligibility, transportation, fiscal, and coordination policies (Smith & Rose, 1991; Strain & Smith, 1993). An example of program standards and personnel policies that have become barriers, is found in states requiring certified special education teachers for young children with disabilities. Because teaching staff in community child care and early education settings are rarely certified in special education, placement of children in Head Start and child care centers is limited (Davis, Granucci, Lester, & Shuster, 1993, May). Disincentives related to fiscal policies are concerned with contracting and allocating funds. A report from New York about the relationship of providing least restrictive environments to funding formulas, said that "because New York's funding formula weights pupils with disabilities based on the type of service they receive, and how much of the day or week the pupils remain segregated from nondisabled peers, the formula actually discourages mainstreaming" (Committee on Education and the Law, draft-1993, p. 19). Eligibility issues arise from the different federal, state, and local government requirements related to children's participation in programs that can provide least restrictive environments. Transportation policies are often disincentives due to inflexible limits on when and where young children may be transported. Issues related to coordination and collaboration between schools and agencies develop out of the education system's centralized decision making, as well as restricting time and travel that are essential to coordinating services.

The Smith and Rose survey (1991) also found that respondents believe attitudes and values about mainstreaming are a barrier. Rose and Smith (1993) reported that "nearly 60% of the survey respondents cited attitudes as a barrier to preschool mainstreaming" (p. 59). The attitudes identified as barriers, relate to turf,

teacher preparedness, awareness, "someone will lose," and communication, collaboration, and respect issues. Stoler's (1992) study compared perceptions among 182 general education teachers toward inclusion. He found that negative perceptions were more frequent among those teachers who had not taken any special education courses during their academic training or attended any special education inservice events. Rose and Smith (1993) suggest that attitude barriers can be reduced through providing appropriate information about mainstreaming practices, opportunities to do joint problem solving, opportunities to observe mainstreaming in action, and joint staff development activities.

Integrating young children with disabilities into community early education and care settings requires staff to implement new roles (Kontos and File, 1993). Staff development activities needed to help staff adopt new roles, are often met with barriers. Kontos and File describe four barriers to staff development including time and financial resources, staff turnover, incompatible theories and practices, and resistance to change. Finding both the times to get away and the money for classroom substitutes, sometimes bar staff from attending activities, despite the desires of staff to participate. Personnel turnover may erode program improvements already initiated and prevent implementation of recommended practices. Special education teachers often wish to ensure that children placed in community settings have their needs met as they would be in a self-contained setting. The theories and practices of that approach to providing early childhood special education are often incompatible with those of child care settings. Resistance to change may result from the desires of staff to continue in familiar roles, imposition of change from outside their setting, and being excluded from decision making related to staff development activities. Resistance to change may

also result from the influence of life-cycle stages in teachers' lives. Sikes (1992) found that the largest teacher age-group in Britain and the United States are those teachers who are in their late thirties and early forties. The need for validation occurs during that stage of life, and the requirement to adopt changes may affect a mature teacher's personal sense of validity.

The literature describes a large number and range of barriers that influence implementation of early childhood special education and related staff development activities. These barriers have arisen from a variety of sources including legislation, national trends, policy implementation, program practices, and individual concerns and attitudes. Complicating the process of facilitating change is the interaction that occurs between the various barriers. For example, federal legislation that addresses the needs of young children, is continually being developed and brought to congress. The various pieces are legislated in different years and often with requirements that are at odds with each other. Legislation providing early childhood special education, was passed after that requiring least restrictive environment. Carrying out the two pieces for young children has challenged public school administrators. Another factor relates to implementing legislation by different departments of the government. Early childhood special education and personnel standards are regulated by the U.S. Department of Education, while child care funding and Head Start come under the Department of Health and Human Services. Further tangling the web of barriers is the mutual reinforcement between policies, tradition, and attitude. Attitudes may keep policy disincentives in place due to the time, effort, and cost of making changes. Likewise, policies may hold attitudes in place because people sometimes fail to realize that change is possible.

Issues Related to Selecting a System of Staff Development

Staff development, inservice education, and training are all terms used to describe programs that provide or enhance employee knowledge and skill. The variety of approaches to carrying out staff development in educational settings has increased as trainers draw on adult education, preservice teacher education, organizational development, and Total Quality Management strategies. The difficulty in selecting an appropriate system of staff development has increased as the number of options has increased. The term "system" is used to refer to a comprehensive model or package of strategies used across an employer setting.

Selecting a system of staff development involves consideration of the people involved, the purpose of the training project, and the process by which it could be accomplished. Harris (1989) describes five areas of strategic considerations related to (a) the needs and characteristics of the trainees, (b) the types of experiences to be used, (c) the particular outcomes to be achieved, (d) whether immediate, intermediate, or long-term outcomes are most important, and (e) whether outcomes relate to changes in knowledge, techniques, or practice. These areas of strategic consideration can help the trainer understand the staff development options described in the literature, as well as to gain a perspective on the recommendations presented by professional organizations. For example, the following statement relates to characteristics of trainees and outcomes. The Division of Exceptional Children (DEC) Task Force on Recommended Practices (1993) has interpreted Section 303.360 of P.L. 99-457 "as meaning that inservice should be delivered by an interdisciplinary team to an interdisciplinary audience to ensure that individuals within programs develop a shared knowledge, attitude, and skill base to implement changes in service delivery"

(p. 111). The DEC Task Force has also described the specific components of effective staff development:

> (a) presentation of content (e.g., theory, knowledge-base, description of a skill or strategy), (b) modeling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching/practice, (c) practice in simulated and actual instructional settings, (d) structured and open-ended feedback, and (e) ongoing follow-up in the actual instructional setting. (p. 112)

The areas of strategic consideration also help the trainer recognize that specific strategies, such as small group discussions, videos, and lectures, are just one component to be addressed in a decision about a staff development system.

Issues related to selecting a system of staff development exist because some strategies are more effective than others. Participants in staff development activities respond to both the content and the strategies used to convey to content. For example, participants respond differently to information about family-centered practices when it is presented by a trainer in a didactic session as compared to the same topic presented by families within a small discussion group. Rogers's (1983) work on the adoption of innovation suggests that the type of innovation-decision made, type of communication used to convey new ideas, and extent of change-facilitator actions all influence how quickly an innovation is adopted.

Inappropriate and poorly implemented staff development methods may prevent adoption of knowledge and skills. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) cite a conference paper by Pink that listed twelve barriers to innovation-effectiveness that could block the effect of any staff development program. They are as follows:

> 1. An inadequate theory of implementation, including too little time for teachers to plan for and learn new skills and practices; 2. District tendencies toward new skills and practices; 3. Lack of sustained central office support and follow-through; 4. Underfunding the project, or trying to do too much with too little support; 5. Attempting to manage the projects from the central office; 6. Lack of technical support and other forms of intensive staff development; 7. Lack of awareness of the limitations of teacher and administrator knowledge about how to implement the project; 8. The turnover of teachers in each school; 9. Too many competing demands or overload; 10. Failure to address the incompatibility of between project requirements and existing organizational policies and structures; 11. Failure to take into account site-specific differences among schools; and 12. Failure to clarify and negotiate the role relationships and partnerships involving the district and the local university-which in each case had a role, albeit unclarified, in the project. (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, pp. 3-4)

An array of negative outcomes can result from failing to develop adequate staff development programs, including a failure to achieve lasting improvements in performance, failure to meet the needs of personnel, and little change in the way teachers provide instruction (Harris, 1989). Furthermore, these results can generate attitudes that encourage staff to respond negatively to any caliber or type of inservice experience. Dissatisfaction with inservice education contributes to a school culture that sees technical assistance, observation and feedback, and other types of staff that occurs within classrooms, as intrusive and theoretical rather than practical (Grimmett & Crehan, 1992). "When teachers are unduly skeptical of and resistant to externally-

imposed change, innovation is less likely to take place than when such skepticism is replaced by sensitive understanding" (p. 63).

There are a number of issues related to selecting a staff development system. It is possible to draw from an increasing variety of approaches, which in turn, increases the complexity of the decision-making task. The use of Harris's areas of strategic consideration are useful for gaining an understanding the components of different systems, the statements about recommended staff development methods from professional organizations, and descriptions of specific training strategies. Careful selection and implementation of a staff development system are essential because some staff development methods are more effective than others in facilitating the participant's adoption of new knowledge and skills. Poorly designed staff development systems can prevent adoption of new skills and knowledge, and generate barriers to any approach to training.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goal and Expectations

The state D.O.E. contracted with the U.A.P. center for the development and implementation of site development methods that encourage adoption of recommended practices for the education of young children with disabilities. After assessing the problem, the following goal was proposed for this practicum.

> The goal of the practicum is to develop, implement, and evaluate the first phase of a project, the purpose of which is the support of teaching staff at a selected site in their implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education.

Behavioral Objectives

The outcomes identified for this practicum focused on the selection and implementation of methods that would support the selected site's ability to implement recommended practices in providing educational services for children ages three through five who have disabilities. The objectives specified the desired outcomes, the means by which they were to be achieved, and the standards against which they were to be assessed. The following objectives were proposed for this practicum.

1. After the implementation period the project team will have a project for which the first phase has been developed, implemented, and evaluated as demonstrated by the following records and documents:

> (a) documents such as a written vision statement, rationale, and implementation plan, (b) minutes of project development meetings, (c) a Gantt chart showing

the proposed and actual implementation of activities of the development, implementation, and evaluation of the first phase, (d) phone contact and site visit logs, (e) completed evaluation records, and (f) a report with recommendations for the next phase of the project.

2. After the implementation period the project team will have information about the site team for the purpose of guiding the project team in their selection of strategies that support teaching staff at a selected site in their implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education as demonstrated by the following records and documents:

(a) background documentation such as the district plan for providing early childhood special education, (b) records of interviews with teaching staff; (c) records of requests for technical assistance, and (d) records of the strategy selection process.

3. After the implementation period the project team will have strategies that have been selected, implemented, and evaluated, for supporting teaching staff at a selected site in their implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education, as demonstrated by the following records and documents:

(a) completed strategy selection forms with outcomes, (b) site visit and phone contact logs, and records of interviews with teaching staff.

4. After the implementation period the project team will have preliminary information about barriers that impede the implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education in the schools of the district that contains the selected site, as demonstrated by the following records and documents:

(a) documents that indicate the existence of barriers and (b) records of the strategy selection process.

Measurement of Objectives

"Project evaluation is the process of systematically gathering, synthesizing, and interpreting reliable and valid information about programs for the purpose of aiding with decisionmaking" (Snyder & Sheehan, 1993, p. 269). The outcomes of decision making may relate to adequacy of resources, refinement of design, process control, accountability, and continuity (Stufflebeam, 1983). In this practicum, valid and reliable information was needed for both formative and summative purposes.

An approach to evaluating the project was decided by considering the information needed to (a) support development and implementation of the project and (b) determine to what extent outcomes were achieved. Several project characteristics were also considered. First, a wide range of activities was to be carried out during this project. The evaluation approach needed to fit the different development and implementation processes being used. Second, most activities were expected to involve too few people to use statistical methodologies. Third, outcomes were expected to produce a variety of documents, therefore, the evaluation approach needed to incorporate those disparate documents and resulting information. Because of the purposes and characteristics of the project, a multimethod approach was adopted.

Multimethod evaluation uses a number of different procedures and tools to collect information related to one question. For example, one question, "Are we implementing effective methods of collecting information about participants?," can be

answered by (a) listing methods being carried out, (b) reviewing minutes from meetings for gaps in the ability to make decisions as the result of information shortages, and (c) asking participants during interviews, whether there is other information that the U.A.P. staff needs to know to understand and meet the needs of the early childhood special education team. Using the combination of methods provides different perspectives on one question and allows comparisons between resulting information.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Solutions for this problem needed to be based on (a) the evidence of the problem, (b) information from the literature about the problem, (c) outcomes defined in objectives, and (d) potential solutions offered in the literature. The four objectives required solutions related to the development of a project design, methods of collecting information about participants' interests, strengths, and needs, strategies for supporting improvement of practices, and mechanisms for identifying barriers to implementing recommended practices.

Possible Solutions Related to Project Development

Project development is a type of organizational change that incorporates movement toward new or renewed goals, commitment, activities, and outcomes. It is essential that project development efforts be well planned. Inadequate development efforts are reflected in project problems such as participant frustration, dissatisfaction, and lack of commitment, budget problems, poor decision making, and failed attempts to solve problems (Eisenstat, 1990; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987; Kilmann, 1989).

The most commonly used approach to project development involves some form of strategic planning. Cunningham (1993) identifies three phases to the development process: defining the need for change, focusing the direction, and developing and implementing the plan. The first phase clarifies the need for change by documenting and defining the problem. The second phase focuses the direction of change by

"(1) identifying opportunities and threats, (2) outlining strengths and weaknesses within the organization, (3) defining values and philosophies, (4) defining a mission statement, and (5) developing a vision for change" (p. 79). The third phase involves generating and implementing an action plan that specifies activities, roles, time lines, and evaluation methods. Strategic planning is valuable since it examines the rationale for the change, defines a philosophy, and provides a process for moving toward the goal. It is an approach that can be used in business, human service, education, industry and many other organizations. Variations to the strategic planning process involve (a) decisions related to the point in project development at which strategic planning is initiated and (b) use of technology to support team participation in the strategic planning process.

Harris (1989) expands on strategic planning by offering a plan-to-plan approach to project development. Citing earlier work from Cunningham, Harris describes similar elements for the planning process, such as the components of the action plan. The main difference is Harris's plan-making as an informed choosing, communicating, and designing process for planning how to plan. It is essentially the development of a set of procedures for carrying out strategic planning across multiple problems or in several organizational contexts. This approach addresses the need for creating a higher-level planning framework that guides planning for short-term or individual programs. It also stresses the differences between planning documents and the processes of planning.

Another format for implementing strategic planning uses group support systems. Other names for this computer-augmented approach to teamwork include "*computer-supported collaborative work* (CSCW), *shared systems, work group computing* and *coordination technology*" (Johansen, 1992). Computer-augmented

teamwork is a method for improving meeting processes that in turn, facilitates activities such as strategic planning. Benefits of using computer-augmented teamwork include enhanced group processes that increase access to information, increased synergy, more objective evaluation, stimulation for better performance, and increased learning (Nunamaker, Dennis, George, Martz, Valacich, and Vogel, 1992). In this approach, electronic meetings take place using a variety of software tools that facilitate the scheduled activities. The GroupSystems software brochure from the Ventana Corporation (undated) states the tools have been used with "proven success in: strategic planning, product development, budgeting, quality assurance, concurrent engineering, market analysis, personnel evaluations, [and] negotiations." Research using artificial and real, intact groups, has been conducted to assess the efficacy of this innovative approach to teamwork (Wynne, Anson, Heminger, & Valacich, 1992). One finding is that work tasks are completed more effectively using group support systems in combination with a group facilitator, than with no support system, the computer support system but no facilitator, or a facilitator but no computer support (Anson, 1991).

In summary, organizational development must be well planned to be effective. Project development is a type of organizational development. The literature contains evidence of the problems that result from inadequate planning. The most commonly used approach to project development is strategic planning which includes defining the need for change, focusing the direction, and developing and implementing the plan (Cunningham, 1993). Harris's (1989) plan-making approach to planning incorporates components of strategic planning, but offers an alternate method of defining and

focusing the problem. Another method for developing a project plan uses strategic planning supported by computer-augmented teamwork (Johansen, 1992).

Possible Solutions for Collecting Participant Information

The literature review found supportive evidence of the value of matching staff development strategies to participants' interests, strengths, and needs. Learning theorists such as Piaget and Inhelder (1969), Vygotsky (1978), and Bronfenbrenner (1979) maintain that people learn through constructing their knowledge of the world. Learning is thus a process motivated by individual interests, strengths, and needs. Rogers (1983) suggests that adoption of new ideas is more likely when they are compatible with adopters' sociocultural values and beliefs, needs of the adopters, and ideas to which they have been previously introduced. This perspective is further supported by adult learning theory. Stayton and Miller (1993) state:

> Adult learners are characterized as: (a) self-directed, (b) entering any educational activity with a wealth of previous personal and professional experiences, and (c) motivated to learn when they experience a need to know or do something to perform effectively. . . . Needs-based inservice lends itself to activities that acknowledge the experiences of participants and build upon those experiences that are relevant to the learner's situation and that emphasize the learner's own goals as the primary incentive for participation. (p. 110)

Inservice activities that address the interests, strengths, and needs of participants increase the likelihood that knowledge and skills will be implemented.

One category of methods used to collect information about the interests, strengths, and needs of participants for staff development projects involves methods of

collecting information about attitudes. Henerson, Morris, and Fitz-Gibbons (1987) list the following ways to collect information about attitudes:

> Approach 1: Self-report measures (Members of Group X report directly about their own attitudes) interviews, surveys, polls; questionnaires and attitude rating scales; logs, journals, diaries. Approach 2: Reports of others (Others report about the attitudes of members of Group X) interviews; questionnaires; logs, journals, reports; observation procedures. Approach 3: Sociometric procedures (Members of Group X report about their attitudes toward one another) peer ratings; social choice techniques. Approach 4: Records: counselor files; attendance records. (p. 22)

Attitudes reflect an individual's beliefs and concerns about himself, others, and the organization of which they are a part. When individual results are taken together, the outcome provides a picture of team interests, strengths, and needs that can then be used to identify strategies to support team development.

The second category involves methods of implementing needs assessments. Needs assessment techniques are information gathering strategies typically used by human service programs to determine the type and extent of needs of a specified group. The needs of a group may be identified by comparing the assessment results to a goal or set of standards. For example, a needs assessment might indicate that half of the general education teaching staff of a school has had no training in special education topics. That needs assessment result might be compared to a standard set as part of the school's accreditation requirements. Cook (1989) indicates that needs assessment techniques can be used in "virtually any setting where programs could benefit from development of clear goals, documentation of rationale for existence, and

determination of service priorities" (p. 462). Strategies suggested by Cook include the use of key informant, community forum, and survey sampling. West, Idol, and Cannon (1989) published a curriculum that provides inservice and preservice education in the area of collaborative consultation. Their instructor's manual contains two needs assessment instruments designed to collect information about participants' perspectives about their own training needs and to identify their preference for type of consultation model. A similar teacher training needs assessment is provided as part the Functional Mainstreaming for Success (FMS) Model (Striefel, Killoran, & Quintero, 1991). The FMS Model also provides a teacher competencies training grid that is used to assess teachers' practices and develop a resource directory of people who can provide training in specific competency areas.

The idea that inservice education is facilitated by matching staff development strategies to participants' interests, strengths, and needs, is supported by the literature on adult learning, change, and adoption of innovations. Many methods and tools are available for collecting participant information such as attitudes, interests, professional background, training needs. Some methods and tools include questionnaires, surveys, observation, polls, logs, and records.

Possible Strategies for Supporting Improvement in Practices

There is an enormous array of models and strategies that can be used to support improvement in the practices of teachers. The literature review considered models, strategies, and guidelines that assist in the selection of strategies.

Models for promoting staff development.

The literature on staff development contains a wide range of models. The models can be characterized in two ways - the focus of change and the process of change.

Orlich (1989) proposes a paradigm that organizes the inservice models into classes based on their focus of change: organization, individual, roles, and trainer. They include Class I - Organization, containing AAIM, school-based, organization-development, and social-system models; Class II - Individual, containing behavioral, humanistic, concerns-based adoption, developmental models; Class III - Roles, containing independent study, competency, education-center models; and Class IV - Trainer, containing exchange, linking-agent, peer-coaching, advocacy models. The ability to review the models from the perspective of focus of the change makes selection of an appropriate model more manageable.

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) completed an extensive review of the literature on staff development. They identified five models of staff development based on the inservice process being used - individually-guided staff development, observation/assessment, development/improvement, training, and inquiry models. Individually-guided staff development is a model in which the individual teacher identifies her need or interest, develops a plan, implements the activity, and assesses her own learning. The observation/assessment model uses reflection and the idea that performance can be improved by another person's observation. The development/improvement model identifies a problem, develops solutions, implements solution activities, assesses the outcomes, and may be carried out by one teacher or a group of teachers, for a short time or over several years. The training model is based

on increasing specific knowledge or skills, anticipates replication of specific outcomes, and is usually provided to teachers outside their teaching environment. The inquiry model, which may be implemented individually or by a group, identifies a question or problem, formulates a hypothesis, collects data, determines results, and formulates a plan that applies the findings.

Besides the paradigm offered by Orlich and the categories offered by Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, the literature on staff development also contains several individual models. These models can often be identified within Orlich's paradigm, as well as fitting one of Sparks and Loucks-Horsley categories. Each model has different ways of meeting teachers' needs and resulting in knowledge and skill outcomes.

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (C-BAM) provides a framework and tools that can serve as a vehicle for implementing staff development (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987). This approach provides a structured system of facilitating the adoption of an innovation, such as recommended practices of early childhood special education. The model contains tools that address different phases, needs, and concerns of the change process. For example, the Roles of Effective Change Facilitators component of the model offers six areas of intervention that change facilitators can use to support adoption of an innovation. This model assumes that the problem has been identified, the need confirmed, and a vision statement written. The model is characteristic of Orlich's Class I: Organization since the goal is adoption of innovation by an organization. It may also be characterized as a development/ improvement model.

An example of a training model is the Functional Mainstreaming for Success Model (Striefel, Killoran, & Quintero, 1991). A primary goal of the FMS model is to

provide teachers with the preparation and training needed to ensure successful mainstreaming of children. Training is carried out in response to teacher training needs and skills assessment. Examples of the training format used in the FMS Model include inservice, workshops, and discussion groups. The FMS Model is an example of a model from Orlich's Class III - Roles because it focuses on a change in the way individual roles are implemented.

The observation/assessment model uses reflective inquiry to enhance individual development. In this model, teachers with the support of a supervisor or facilitator, develop the skill of thinking about their own practices, determine a plan for increasing their knowledge and skills, and carry out the activities. E. Jones (1993) and Jaffe (1991) approach development of reflective skills by helping teachers and student teachers to see themselves through story telling, that is, observation and feedback. Both Jones and Jaffe start with the facilitator telling the story and then shift to the teacher's own story telling. Ross (1990) identifies analysis of teaching units, case studies, action research, ethnography, and reflective writing as strategies that support the development of reflection. Reflective inquiry is a model that fits Orlich's Class II - Individual focus of change.

Collaborative consultation is a model of staff development in which the consultant and consultee are mutually responsible for decision making, implementation, and evaluation of the development process (Idol, 1988). The process usually takes place in a one-to-one situation or with the consultant and a small group of teaching staff. Activities included in collaborative consultation methods of staff development are "theory, demonstration, practice with feedback, and on the job coaching" (Rosenfield, 1988, p. 163). The activities take place within the classroom or outside class time.

Collaborative consultation is a Class IV - Trainer model on Orlich's paradigm and an example of Sparks and Loucks-Horsley observation/assessment category because it incorporates observation and feedback strategies.

Strategies that support staff development.

A common approach to staff development is to select a strategy from a list of possibilities. Efforts are usually made to select a strategy that matches the characteristics of the inservice recipients, information or skills to be acquired, amount of time available for learning, presentation form preferred by the trainer, and the amount of available training dollars. The literature on inservice education contains lists of strategies developed by authors including Jones (1993) and Harris (1989). An example of a strategy list follows (numeration omitted):

> amplified telephone, cadre system, classes, class observations, clinics, coaching (peer), committees (task group), computer aided instruction, conferences, consultants, continuing education, discussion groups, educational centers, films, extension courses, institutes, instructional TV, internships, laboratories, lectures, microteaching, oral tradition, paired teaching, professional association meetings, professional association training, professional journals, programmed instruction, resource persons, role modeling, role-playing, school/university cooperative, simulations, staff meetings, study groups, teacher visitations, teacher association briefings, two-way telecommunications, university courses, workshops. (Orlich, 1989, p.41)

Strategies are mechanisms that carry the needed information and skills within the larger framework of the models of staff development.

Methods for deciding between various models and strategies.

The literature contained information about models and strategies for staff development. It also provided information that could guide the process of selecting between them. This information falls into three areas - a tool for deciding among models, principles for planning staff development programs, and characteristics of strategies that increase acceptance of the needed information and skills.

Orlich's (1989) Dichotomous Key for Staff Development is a tool that can be used to decide between the various models and strategies. This method is presented as a flow chart that incorporates his paradigm for understanding and classifying models. The paradigm, described earlier in this chapter, is based on the focus of change. Entry to the flow chart is based on whether the focus is to "further the organization, . . . promote individual competence, . . . change an individual's role, . . . [or] develop a cadre of specialized trainers" (p. 110). The user is then guided to selecting one of many models described in the paradigm.

Harris (1989) offers a list of 49 principles to be used in planning inservice programs. The principles can help a person who is developing an inservice program, think about all aspects of a prospective model in comparison to the characteristics and needs of the group he will be training. Harris developed the set of principles by synthesizing a number of guidelines published by other authors. They address the following aspects for planning programs: clients served, time of training, involvement, locale(s) for training, resources, locus of control and decision, scope of planning, systematicness of planning, design for learning, content for learning, incentives for participation, leadership, evaluation, policies, and system relationships.

An important aspect of selecting a model or strategy, is a responsiveness to the interests, strengths, and needs of participants. Fullan and Hargreaves, Sikes, and Rogers each address the need for responsiveness to participants, but from different angles. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) discuss the need for addressing the context and culture of the daily work experiences of the participant. A framework for facilitating development must incorporate "1 the teacher's *purpose*; 2 the teacher as *person*, 3 the real world *context* in which teachers work, [and] 4 the *culture* of teaching: the working relationship that teachers have with colleagues inside and outside the school" (p. 5). Selection of a model or strategy may also be addressed from the standpoint of life-cycle research. Sikes (1992) maintains that teachers respond in different ways to staff development activities and mandated change, because of life cycle stages. She suggests that it is especially important that mature teachers be recognized for their professional expertise and consulted regarding selection of staff development activities. Rogers (1983) holds that certain characteristics of innovations influence their rate of adoption. He says that innovations are more readily adopted if they have a relative advantage over a preceding one, are compatible with adopters' values and beliefs, similar to previously introduced ideas, are simple and easy to understand, contain opportunities for trial adoption, and are observable.

Summary.

The literature contained a paradigm, models, and lists of strategies that could support an early childhood special education team's implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education. Examples of models included the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (C-BAM), Functional Mainstreaming for Success (FMS), reflective inquiry, and collaborative consultation models. Several lists of

strategies, such as workshops, conferences, teleconferencing, peer teaching, and discussion groups were identified. In addition, the literature contained guidelines that could help in the selection of an appropriate model or strategy that matches the interests, strengths, and needs of participants. Another option for this aspect of the project was to develop a tool or mechanism that could guide the selection of strategies by combining the information about principles of planning staff development projects and the guidelines for addressing the interests, strengths, and needs of teachers.

Possible Mechanisms for Identifying Barriers

Although the literature review revealed substantial information about barriers to implementing of recommended practices, there was only one that referred to a mechanism for identifying barriers. Smith and Rose (1993) developed a policy self-assessment guide that uses establishment of a team, development of definitions, brainstorming related to possible barriers, classification of the possible barriers by type and level of policy, and attaining copies of written policies. Rose and Smith's (1991) original report on barriers was developed from data collected from a ten-state survey of local education agency directors, administrators, and others, which suggests that a survey methodology could also be used to identify barriers. Another approach to identifying barriers to appropriate education was carried out by members of an advocacy group who interviewed parents, providers, organizations, and local and state officials (Advocates for Children of New York, 1993). Another possible method is a review of local and regional newspaper reports about accessibility to a free and appropriate education and other school issues.

Description and Justification for the Selected Solutions

The solutions were selected by considering the evidence of the problem, the expected outcomes defined in objectives, and the value of the potential solutions offered in the literature. The solutions addressed the need for project development, a method for collecting information about the interests, strengths, and needs of participants, strategies that support the implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education, and a mechanism for identifying barriers.

Solution for Project Development

The solution identified for developing a project design was the use of a strategic planning process facilitated by computer-augmented teamwork. It was anticipated that strategic planning would guide project development by ensuring that the rationale for the project was defined, the purpose and direction of the change were delineated, and a plan for the project was developed and carried out. Strategic planning has been confirmed as an effective approach to project development by successful outcomes in many organizations over many years. The use of computer-augmented teamwork was added to ensure that the strategic planning was a genuine team process. Use of the computer laboratory, software, and a facilitator was expected to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of planning. Implementing computer-augmented strategic planning was a feasible solution since the U.A.P. at which the writer is employed, has a collaborative work lab. The lab has been successfully used by a variety of large corporations, state government departments, human service organizations, and university programs.

Harris's (1989) planning-to-plan was not selected because it did not address all phases of project development. In addition, the writer was unable to identify any situations in which the approach had been used within organizations.

Solution for Collecting Information About Participants

The solution selected for collecting information about the interests, strengths, and needs of participants was to use a combination of methods. It was expected that self-report measures, such as interviews, questionnaires, and attitude rating scales would be most important. These methods solicit the perspectives of participants regarding their preference for strategies and awareness of their own needs for training. Efforts to gain participant perspectives were considered important since it was the belief of the center team that it would be necessary to gain the trust of the early childhood special education team to facilitate implementation of recommended practices. This belief was supported by the literature. Two additional methods would be the use of reports of others, carried out by using observations made by both the center team and early childhood special education team members, and the use of records that would provide information about the site, school culture, and history of the district.

Several solutions were rejected. Cook's (1989) use of community forum and survey sampling, was not adopted because those strategies are more appropriate to information gathering from communities and large populations as compared to an early childhood special education program. The two needs assessment instruments contained in the curriculum published by West, Idol, and Cannon (1989) were not adopted because they were designed as specific parts of the curriculum and would have required substantial adaptation to use within an early childhood special education

program. The needs assessment from the Functional Mainstreaming for Success (FMS) Model (Striefel, Killoran, & Quintero, 1991) was rejected for similar reasons. The needs being assessed in that model were specifically related to teachers' abilities to carry out the FMS Model, not recommended practices of early childhood special education.

Solution for Selecting Strategies

It was decided that the solution to selecting strategies that meet the strengths, needs, and interests of the early childhood special education team would take place in three steps. First, the center team would identify strategies that could be effectively used within the site development format. Second, the center team, with input from the site team, would develop a strategy selection tool to guide selection of strategies based on characteristics and preferences of the participants, the information or skill needed, and aspects of the setting. Third, the strategies would be carried out within a collaborative consultation model. This approach would help the early childhood special education team in taking responsibility for implementing recommended practices of early childhood special education. It was anticipated that this approach would reduce the sense of imposed change experienced teachers might feel because of outside intervention. This approach was thought to be valuable because it would take place within the context of the classroom rather than taking the teachers out to training, workshops, or course work that might not relate to their daily experiences. The collaborative consultation model was selected rather than specific strategies, because the model provided a clear approach to providing support to teaching staff. It emphasized the role each individual had in guiding his or her own professional and

personal development. It was a model that appeared to contain the flexibility necessary to meet people's changing needs.

Several types of models described in Orlich's (1989) paradigm, such as Class III-Roles and Class IV-Trainer, were rejected because they did not match the characteristics of the setting in which the project was to occur. Other categories of models described by Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) were rejected because they did not match the intent of proposal funded by the state D.O.E. Examples included individually-guided staff development, training, and inquiry models. The literature contained information about some specific models, such as C-BAM, FMS, and reflective inquiry models. The C-BAM was considered inappropriate for this project because it was not participant-driven but administratively imposed. In addition, C-BAM focuses on adoption of a single or vary narrow range of innovation, as compared to the broad program development being promoted in this project. The FMS model was rejected because it was a single purpose model - facilitating implementation of mainstreaming. The reflective inquiry model was not adopted because it did not enhance team interaction.

Solution for Identifying Barriers

Identification of barriers was to be initiated through interviews with teaching staff, administrators, and others. The policy self-assessment guide, by Rose and Smith (1993), was to be used to consider the barriers identified during interviews, to identify the type and level of the policy thought to be a barrier, to locate the written policy, and to provide guidance for the possible development of strategies. The review of the literature was to be continued to find additional strategies for identifying barriers to recommended practices.

Next Steps

The project steps were planned to support the attainment of the outcomes. The project was expected to move through several phases of activity including project planning, implementation, and evaluation. The implementation phase was to include the development of positive relationships with site staff, discussion about needed information and/or skills for implementing recommended practices of early childhood special education, joint development of individual plans for gaining knowledge or skills, identification of potential strategies, development of a strategy selection tool for matching strategies to interests, strengths, and needs of participants, implementation of staff development strategies, and interviews about possible barriers to implementing recommended practices of early childhood special education.

Report of Action Taken

Implementation of the practicum solutions began with strategic planning of the site development project (Objective 1). Once planning was completed, the site development project was initiated. Activities were implemented to gather information about the early childhood special education team (Objective 2), to develop, select, and implement strategies (Objective 3), and to identify barriers (Objective 4). The solutions were carried out over an eight month period. The table on the following page is a time line of the activities as they were proposed for this practicum and as they were actually implemented by the U.A.P. center with the site team.

Strategic Planning of the Site Development Project.

The first step of implementing the practicum was strategic planning with computer-augmented teamwork. Three preliminary meetings were held to prepare for

this process. The first meeting, was a planning meeting between the writer and the project coordinator about the upcoming collaborative work lab activities. The second meeting, which took place between the director of the collaborative work lab and the writer, focused on expectations for the lab sessions, identifying a facilitator, and setting up dates for work sessions. The director expressed an interest in facilitating the process and identified two people who could alternate for providing the needed technical support. She also suggested ways participants could prepare for the work sessions. The third meeting took place with center team members. The writer described her meeting with the director of the work lab, distributed copies of the center's mission and statements of purpose from current grants, and talked about strategic planning.

Five sessions were held in the collaborative work lab over two-and-a-half months. Each session was about two hours long. Five to eight members of the center team participated in each session. A meeting facilitator led the sessions with computer support provided by a technical facilitator. Appendix B contains further information about the collaborative work lab. During the sessions, participants simultaneously contributed ideas and comments by using computers connected through a network server. The ideas and comments from the whole group were displayed on a public screen and on each individual computer. GroupSystems (Ventana, undated) software was used, which contains a variety of tools that support group meetings. Examples of the tools include Group Writer, Topic Commenter, and Idea Organizer. The results of each session were saved on disk and participants received print-outs after each session.

Table 2
Comparison of Proposed and Actual Time Lines for Practicum

Proposed Time Line	Actual Time Line
Develop strategic plan using computer-augmented teamwork October - December	Developed strategic plan using computer-augmented teamwork October - December
Implement formative evaluation October - May	Implemented formative evaluation October - May*
Collect background information about site October	Collected background information about site January - May*
Secure commitment and support of administrators October	Secured commitment and support of administrators November - February
Make first contact with site team October	Made first contact with site team January
Make first site visit November	Made first site visit February
Implement first development activity with site team December	Implemented first development activity with site team March
Implement development activities with site team December - May	Implemented development activities with site team March - May*
Draft strategy selection tool December - February	Drafted strategy selection tool May
Use of strategy selection tool draft February - May	Used strategy selection tool draft Not initiated*
Identify barriers March - April	Identified barriers March - April*
Implement summative evaluation May	Initiated summative evaluation May

* Activities to continue through the summer and next school year.

The purpose of the lab sessions was to develop a strategic plan for the site development project. The first two sessions focused on generating a vision statement for the project. After the second session in the lab, team members began to work in small groups of two and three to write value statements and operating principles. The results of the small groups were then brought to the work sessions in the lab when everyone responded to the ideas. During the sessions a vision, values, and operating principles were developed (see Appendix C).

In the first month of the practicum implementation, the first unexpected event occurred. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services made a request for proposals that addressed model inservice training. The U.A.P. center team decided to submit a proposal related to site development and collaborative teaming. During the second month of practicum implementation, the sessions in the collaborative work lab were refocused to address the proposal. The vision, values, and operating principles generated for site development were reframed for incorporation in the proposal. In addition, a goal, objectives, and a time line with activity phases were developed for the proposal and later adapted to be included within the site development project (see Appendix C). The site development project continued to move slowly forward during the development of the model inservice training proposal which was due at the end of the third month of practicum implementation.

The next unexpected event was receiving word that the U.A.P. center had been selected to coordinate activities in the state for a national outreach project related to transition of young children into the next setting. The event affected the center by creating the need to identify two sites - one for site development and one for the

transition project. A decision was made that it would be preferable to carry out both projects within the local special education cooperative. The writer prepared descriptions of both projects. Near the end of the second month of the practicum, the writer's supervisor met with the director, assistant director, and preschool coordinator of the special education cooperative to present the request to implement the projects. Because of certain situational constraints, it was most appropriate that the project coordinator initiate the process. The request to carry out the projects was accepted.

Implementation of the Site Development Project

Recruitment of an early childhood special education team.

The next step was to recruit an early childhood special education team for the site development project. The literature on staff development clearly says that changes in practice are more likely when staff development activities are participant driven (Epstein, 1993; Sikes, 1992; Stayton & Miller, 1993; Thurman, 1993). Based on that information and collaboration with the preschool coordinator of the cooperative, the center team decided to present information about both projects simultaneously to all of the early childhood staff of the special education cooperative. The presentations to the early childhood special education teams were further slowed by the holidays, weather-related school closing, and efforts to find a meeting time when most of the participants could attend.

Preparation for the meeting was initiated by drafting a letter that the director of special education could use to announce the meeting to participants. The writer developed handouts describing each project and the agenda was finalized. As part of this process, the center team decided that each of its members would attend this meeting to communicate the importance of team relationships. The team-to-team

approach (Stayton & Miller, 1993) was implemented to ensure that an interdisciplinary team was working with the school team. This approach was expected to validate the role of each site team member and to model team communication strategies.

The projects were presented to the early childhood special education staff, related services staff, and administrators of the special education cooperative. The location of the meeting was a conference room at one of the schools. It was attended by 17 people from five schools including five preschool teachers (one from each school), two teaching assistants, one student teacher, two principals, one speech-language pathologist, two occupational therapists, one physical therapist, and the director, assistant director, and preschool coordinator from special education cooperative. The writer described each project separately. Team members elaborated on statements or responded to questions that addressed related services, family participation, and other aspects of the projects. Participants were asked to sign an interest form if he or she wanted to attend a subsequent meeting at which the projects were to be explained in depth. Each preschool teacher signed the interest form.

During the interim between the meetings, the writer talked with each preschool teacher to respond to questions. In addition, the center team began to elaborate plans of ways to respond if more than two site teams wished to participate. It was decided that they did not have the resources to work with three sites at once. If more than two site teams wished to participate, they would ask the additional teams to delay starting until the fall.

The second meeting to recruit sites was held three weeks later. The center team sent the invitation letters to the teaching staff, related services personnel, and administrators of the special education cooperative. The meeting was held in the

conference room of a school that was easiest to reach for those staff who traveled most far. It was attended by 15 people. Most participants had attended the previous meeting, but one school was not represented. The writer presented the projects in more depth, describing responsibilities, timetables, and benefits. The participants had more questions about the projects than during the previous meeting. At the meeting it was apparent that most people were unable to make a commitment. In most cases, people wanted to discuss the projects further with team members and principals. The writer offered to respond to any questions and to meet with individual programs and principals to facilitate the process. The center team asked participants to respond by the following Friday, which allowed a week-and-a-half of time to decide. At the conclusion of the meeting, the teacher and principal from one school stated their desire to participate in the transition project. This was the school originally anticipated to be part of the site development project.

The writer continued her efforts to make sure the teaching staff, related services personnel, and administrators had the information they needed to make decisions. Letters were sent to each principal who was not present. A packet of the materials distributed during the meeting was prepared and sent to the participants of the school that was not represented. Teachers and principals began to call with their decisions. The schools were closed for a number of days due to the weather which stretched the decision-making process into the following week. The writer received calls from staff of the four uncommitted schools. Three responses were negative. One teacher's response was positive, but commitment from the principal was needed. The writer visited the principal to explain the project in depth. The principal expressed his interest and gave his commitment at the conclusion of the meeting. A date was set for

presenting the project to the early childhood special education team of that school. The writer made a brief visit to the preschool teacher and teaching assistant before leaving the school.

Establishment of collaborative relationships with the site team.

The first meeting with the site team was designed to set the site development process in motion. The preschool teacher and the writer identified and then contacted the people whose participation would be important for the project. The on-site meeting was attended by the preschool teacher, teaching assistant, principal, assistant principal, speech-language pathologist, physical therapist, and four members of the center team. Supporting materials were distributed including an agenda, overviews of the project and the self-study process, and a tentative time line. The writer led the meeting with discussion of the team-driven development process that would take place. The steps would include self study, identifying a focus for the development activities, generating a plan of action, followed by implementation. Other topics discussed during the meeting involved (a) identifying other people whose participation would be valuable including a parent, social worker, and others, (b) the school philosophy, mission, megaskills statements, accreditation goals, and other background documents important to the self-study process, (c) best times for meetings, (d) times to observe classroom activities, and (e) a date and purpose for the next meeting.

The writer began to develop collaborative relationships with the preschool teacher, teaching assistant, and other members of the early childhood special education team through phone conversations, visiting the classroom, and observations. The writer met many children, noted the classroom environment, mood, routines, teaching strategies, staff-child interactions, and peer relationships between staff. It

was observed that many recommended practices being carried out. During the visits, the teacher began expressing her interests and concerns about the parts of the early childhood special education program that she wanted to explore or address. These ranged from developmentally appropriate practice and transdisciplinary play-based intervention to the need for more collaboration time among team members.

Implementation of the self-study process.

The next step of the site development project was the self-study process which was introduced at the following meeting with the site team. The two-hour meeting was attended by the teacher, teaching assistant, social worker, physical therapist, speech-language pathologist, and assistant principal and four members of the center team. Preparations included reproduction of the self-study tool for each person. Before the start of the meeting, the writer posted three charts that presented the agenda for the session, outcomes for the day, and the sequence of team development.

The session focused on understanding the self-study tool and how to complete it. A variety of options for completing the study were offered, such as the whole team working through the tool together to develop consensus or the possibility of working in small groups and individually, followed by coming together to develop consensus. A date and plan were negotiated for completing the tool. The site team decided to complete the tools individually or in small groups and then return them to the writer who would average responses and identify practices which they had found important. A date was set for the next meeting at which the statistical results of the self-study would be shared.

In addition to the people who attended the meeting, the preschool teacher had discussed the project with a kindergarten teacher, the special education inclusion

resource teacher, a second speech-language pathologist, and parents. Although none of them were present, they had expressed an interest in the project and a willingness to complete the self-study tool. The writer offered to meet individually with these people to give them an overview of the tool and how to complete it. The next week the writer met with the grandparent and parent of a preschool child, the kindergarten teacher, and the second speech-language pathologist to provide information about the self-study.

Following the meeting, the writer contacted a technical support people from the collaborative work lab to make use of Survey Tool, a piece of the GroupSystems software. The support person translated the self-study tool to a survey format and the writer was then able to code each person's responses from the self-study tool. The number of responses, mean, range, and standard deviation were calculated for each practice. Because of this information, it was possible to identify the practices that people felt were not occurring or should be targeted for change.

Eleven people completed the self-study tool. Most people worked individually, although the teacher and teaching assistant worked through it together, discussing each question. Many people wrote comments related to not knowing if the practice was carried out, if a written document existed, the feasibility of a practice, and that some people implemented the practice but others did not. Based on verbal reports, the tool required between two and ten hours to complete, a sizable time investment for staff busy with case reviews.

The statistical results from the self study were presented to the site team at a three-hour session attended by the preschool teacher, teaching assistant, kindergarten teacher, speech-language pathologist, physical therapist, social worker, principal, and

four people from the center. The supporting materials for the meeting included handouts related to the stages of team development, indicators of successful team interaction, team functions, and an example of a form that could be used to develop an action plan. Charts posted on the wall included an agenda, the outcomes for the day, and the sequence of team development.

The meeting began with a discussion of team development. While reviewing the handouts the writer pointed out that the team was currently at the second stage, "storming," in which people begin to reveal personal agendas, ideas tend to go in circles before focusing, and efforts are made to clarify the purpose of the team.

The self study results reflected people's feelings and beliefs related to recommended practices of early childhood special education. The writer noted which practices the site team felt were not occurring, those that should be targeted for change, those that were highly prioritized for change, and those to which few people responded. As the discussion progressed, participants began to see which program components and practices were more frequently identified. The amount of material and feedback from the self study was substantial. In presenting the statistical results, the writer pointed out that individual perspectives change from day to day as a person learns and experiences life. The general results could look different on another day.

The last part of the meeting related to decision making about the results and how to identify a focus for the action plan. This was difficult because participants had not had time to think about the information and were not ready to identify a focus. Family-centered services, inclusion, and personnel program components were identified through the self-study results, but it apparent that participants wanted more discussion about several component areas. Factors that compounded the decision-

making process that included involvement of the participants in individualized education program (I.E.P.) meetings, end-of-the-year reports, planning for summer school, and vacations. The site team decided they wanted to meet one more time before the end of the school year. The purpose of the meeting would be to spend time talking about each program component to increase understanding of that aspect of early childhood special education.

It was at this point in the site development project that the time available for practicum ran out. However, both the site development project and the writer's role as site coordinator continued.

Implementation of Mechanisms to Collect Information About the Site Team

The solution identified for collecting information about the interests, strengths, and needs of participants, was to use a combination of self-report methods such as interviews, questionnaires, and attitude rating scales. A self-study process was implemented as the primary method for learning about the site team. The selected tool was an adaptation of the self-assessment tool *Best Practice Indicators for Early Childhood Special Education Programs* (Early Childhood Programs/Center for Developmental Disabilities, undated). Each respondent was asked to report his or her own feelings and beliefs about the implementation of recommended practices in their early childhood special education program. The decision to use the adapted tool was based on the writer's review of a variety of self-study instruments that incorporated recommended practices of early childhood special education.

The self-study tool used a questionnaire format with rating scales and optional short answers. Each component of an early childhood special education program was addressed by the adapted tool. The components include family-centered services,

Child Find, comprehensive evaluation, Individualized Education Programs, physical environment, curriculum, interactions among staff and children, inclusion, transition planning, personnel, and program evaluation. Each component listed recommended practices and asked the respondent to state whether the practice occurred, whether it should be targeted for change, and to assign a priority rating. In addition, the tool provided space for comments about each practice.

Two other methods were used to learn about the characteristics, interests, strengths, and needs of the site team. One method involved observations made by center team members. Anecdotal observations were made and phone calls and conversations were logged. The second method was to use documents that provided information about the site, school culture, and history of the program. Examples of documents that provided to the center team's understanding of the early childhood special education program were newspaper accounts of changes occurring in the special education cooperative, copies of the district's mission, philosophy, accreditation goals, and megaskills statements, and also school newsletters.

Implementation of Staff Development Strategies

The solution to the problem of selecting strategies to meet the strengths, needs, and interests of the site team was to take place in three steps. First, the center team would identify strategies that could be effectively used within the site development format. Second, a tool would be developed to guide selection of strategies based on characteristics and preferences of the participants, the information or skill needed, and aspects of the setting to be considered. Development of the tool was to incorporate the ideas of the site team. Third, the strategies would be carried out within a collaborative consultation model.

A systematic process and set of documenting forms were drafted for identifying and matching strategies to the strengths, interests, and needs of the site team. The first step of development focused on identifying the content areas of early childhood special education in which center team members had expertise and could do training and technical assistance activities. This step helped the center team identify their strengths and the areas in which they would personally need additional training or would need to rely on the expertise of nonteam members. The second step involved identifying the strategies previously used by the center team to increase participant skills and knowledge. In addition, the writer reviewed other strategies that could be used within a site development context. The next step was drafting a process and a set of documenting forms (see Appendix D). The process and documenting forms were shared with the preschool teacher to get her feedback.

At this point in developing the strategy selection process and documenting forms, the writer's practicum concluded. Because the center's site development project was continuing, the next steps of this activity were expected to involve the use and refinement of the process and forms.

Identification of Barriers to Implementing Recommended Practices

The expected solution to the problem of identifying barriers was through interviews with teaching staff, administrators, and others. The policy self-assessment guide (Smith & Rose, 1993) was to be used for considering likely barriers, identifying the policy type and level, locating the written policy, and providing guidance for the possible development of strategies. This solution was minimally carried out. Instead, identification of barriers primarily occurred through documenting the events and conversations related to the development and implementation of the site development

project. For example, one preschool teacher who attended the initial presentations about site development, said that she was unable to participate in the project because of the lack of interest on the part of her team members. A list of barriers is included in Appendix E. The delays that occurred in carrying out the project blocked the writer's ability to fully use the next steps of the solution. Formal interviews and the use of the policy self-assessment guide were expected to take place as the site development project continued.

Evaluation of the Site Development Project

The first objective for this practicum states that the initial phase of the site development project would be planned, implemented, and evaluated. Evaluation was to take place (a) as part of the writer's practicum process and (b) as described in the strategic plan generated by the center team for the site development project. Both formative and summative evaluation activities were to be implemented.

Formative evaluation activities have been implemented throughout the site development project. The formative evaluation activities for the practicum and the site development project were one and the same. Formative evaluation was carried out by reviewing and using the minutes of the planning and implementation meetings, the phone and site visit logs, and the draft and final versions of documents. In addition, it was a standard practice for the center team to debrief after each meeting with the site team. Debriefing discussions addressed what went well and what did not, implications of the meeting outcomes, alternate strategies that could have been used to achieve the same purpose, and what the next steps were to be. Detailed records of the debriefing meetings were kept as part of the site log.

Summative evaluation of the practicum was implemented with this document serving as the report. Summative evaluation of the site development project is expected to take place when the site team's action plan for the school year has been completed in June 1995.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Summary of the Problem

The U.A.P. center had received funding from the state D.O.E. to implement a site development project that would support an early childhood special education team in their implementation of recommended practices. There were four major gaps in the development of the project. First, the project did not have organizational structures such as a mission or goals. Second, the intent was to implement strategies that were responsive to the interests, strengths, and needs of participants, but mechanisms had not been identified which would help center staff gain knowledge and understanding of the participants. Third, strategies had not been identified which would help participants adopt and implement recommended practices. Fourth, there was evidence of barriers to implementing recommended practices, but an approach had not been selected which could be used to identify and address the barriers.

Summary of the Solutions

Solutions were selected and implemented to accomplish the goal of developing, implementing, and evaluating a project that would help an early childhood special education team implement recommended practices. The first solution put into effect was the development of a strategic plan using computer-augmented teamwork. When implementation of the strategic plan began, the other solutions were initiated. A self-study tool was identified and used to gain knowledge and understanding of the interests, strengths, and needs of the project participants. Strategies were identified

that could be used to help the early childhood special education team expand their use of recommended practices. A strategy selection process and documenting forms were generated to facilitate training and technical assistance activities. In addition, barriers that impeded recommended practice of early childhood special education, were noted in a log.

Results

Objective One: After the implementation period the project team will have a project for which the first phase has been developed, implemented, and evaluated.

This practicum focused on the first phase of a multiyear site development project expected to culminate with the site team demonstrating recommended practices to their peers. The first phase of the project focused on implementation of recommended practices by the site team. The writer and U.A.P. center team anticipated that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the first phase of the project would be completed during this practicum.

Records of planning sessions and the resulting documents confirm that strategic planning was implemented using computer-augmented teamwork. A vision, values, operating principles, goal and objectives, time line with activities, and a flow chart of the project development process were generated. These documents are included in Appendix C: Plan for Site Development Project. An example of a print-out documenting the computer-augmented teamwork is provided in Appendix F: Print-Out from a Collaborative Work Lab Session. Although the project was adequately planned, unexpected events influenced both the planning and implementation process, as described in the section titled Report of Action Taken of Chapter IV.

Implementation of the site development project was initiated, but not completed at the conclusion of the practicum. Site development activities that were not completed include the site team's identification of a focus area, development of a plan of action, and implementation of training and technical assistance activities to address the focus area. Appendix G is the time line developed for the site development project in comparison with the actual dates of activities. Documents were retained from all of the activities related to recruitment of the site team, development of collaborative relationships with the team, and the self-study process. The writer's log includes notes from phone calls, site visits, observations, and other activities (see Appendix H for a sample of a log entry).

Both formative and summative evaluations of the first phase of the site development project were to be implemented. Formative evaluation took place throughout the development and implementation of the site development. Information from formative evaluation was used to adjust plans and activities. One type of formative evaluation activity involved debriefing following meetings with the site team. Appendix H: Sample of a Site Log Entry is a record of that process. Summative evaluation of the first phase of the site development was not carried out because implementation was not complete.

Objective Two: After the implementation period, the project team will have information about the site team for the purpose of guiding the project team in the selection of strategies that support teaching staff at a selected site in their implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education.

The U.A.P. center team selected and adapted a self-study tool as the primary method by which to gain knowledge and understanding of the site team's interests,

strengths, and needs. The tool used a self-reporting questionnaire and short answer format combined with statements of recommended practice in early childhood special education. The site team's use of the self-study tool provided substantial amounts of information about their early childhood special education program. In addition, the writer collected documents such as school newsletters and philosophy, mission, and goal statements. The center team used the resulting information to gain an understanding of the team and to guide their development process.

Objective Three: After the implementation period, the project team will have strategies that have been selected, implemented, and evaluated, for supporting teaching staff at a selected site in their implementation of recommended practices of early childhood education.

This objective was partially attained. The solution involved three steps including (a) identification of potential strategies, (b) development of a strategy selection tool, and (c) implementation of the strategies using a collaborative consultation approach. The objective also called for evaluation of the strategies. The strategy selection procedures and documenting forms are contained in Appendix D. The Interest Form contained in Appendix D lists possible strategies. At the conclusion of the practicum, the strategies, procedures, and forms were considered to be in a draft format. They had not been used sufficiently to validate their effectiveness nor to determine whether additional strategies should be included and others discarded.

Objective Four: After the implementation period, the project team will have preliminary information about the barriers that impede the implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education in the schools of the district that contained the selected site.

The solution to be implemented for this objective included identification of barriers through interviewing project participants, followed by using a policy self-assessment guide to facilitate their resolution. Although barriers were identified, this did not occur through an interview process. In addition, the policy self-assessment guide was not used to evaluate and resolve the barriers due to the delays in implementing the project. Barriers were identified as they arose during the planning and implementation of the site development project and as they were mentioned in conversations with participants, observed during site visits, and noted by participants during the self-study process. The barriers are listed in Appendix E.

Discussion

The objectives for this practicum focused on project planning, implementation, and evaluation, methods for gaining knowledge and understanding of the site team, systematic procedures for identifying and implementing training and technical assistance strategies, and identifying barriers to the implementation of recommended practices. These objectives were only partially achieved at the conclusion of the practicum. Failure to meet objectives was not a problem of the solutions, but the result of unexpected delays.

Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation of the Site Development Project

Effective planning is critical to achieving expectations for a project. The center staff used work sessions at the collaborative work lab to plan the site development project. Their efforts resulted in a vision statement, values, operating principles, a goal and objectives, and a time line with activities.

Planning was facilitated through computer-augmented teamwork. An evaluation of the initial lab session contained strongly favorable comments about the session, the

lab, and the facilitator. Benefits that typically result from using computer-augmented teamwork, such as more input in reduced time, reduced communication dominance, facilitated agenda control and completion, more topic focus, and easier modification of the output (Bostrom & Anson, 1992) clearly occurred during the work sessions. Yet, it is likely that the team could have produced plans without the technological linkage. Center staff had worked together long enough and were sufficiently comfortable with each other to contribute equally to the planning process. What is uncertain is whether the quality of the product would have been the same, whether it would have been accomplished in a greater, lesser, or the same amount of time, and whether staff would have felt more positive, less positive, or the same about developing a project plan. It would have been possible to recruit a meeting facilitator to lead staff through the process without the computer technology. The facilitator would have needed to monitor the agenda, solicit input from all participants, and ensure task accomplishment. It would have also been possible to use a lap-top computer set up to display input on a movie screen using a data projection device in combination with an overhead projector. These pieces of equipment are more frequently available in the work place than in the past. The equipment allows easy manipulation of the content being generated, but requires one person to do input for the entire group. Another way in which the tasks could have been accomplished is through the standard chart paper strategy. Despite the difficulty in assessing the benefits of using computer-augmented teamwork, the writer feels it was an effective approach and anticipates using it again for other projects.

One characteristic of project implementation that must be addressed during the planning process, is the probable appearance of unexpected events. The center team

used formative evaluation procedures to adjust plans and procedures when unexpected large and small events caused problems such as project delays or difficulty in getting in touch with someone by phone.

Several delays affected the project. The first delay resulted from the decision to develop the inservice training model proposal. The writer described in the Chapter IV - section Report of Action Taken, the similarity and mutual influence each had on the development of the other. The other impact of the inservice training proposal was the amount of staff time and attention consumed by the development process. Although it did not stop progress on site development, the project was clearly delayed. The second delay, also described in the section Report of Action Taken - Chapter IV, came about when a decision was made to offer the site development and transition projects to the five preschool programs of the special education cooperative. The decision facilitated self-identification of the interested sites, but resulted in a substantial delay. At the time the practicum proposal was approved, preliminary identification of a site had already taken place. Adjustments to the proposed time line were considered as the impact of the delays and upcoming holidays became clear. In addition, the literature on program development and change in teaching practices suggested that additional time should be allocated to the change process (Epstein, 1993; Salisbury, Palombaro, & Hollowood, 1993). Despite the delays, implementation of the plan was well under way, but not been completed at the conclusion of this practicum. A site team had been identified, collaborative relationships were taking place between the early childhood special education team and the center team, the self-study process was moving toward resolution, and training and technical assistance strategies had been initiated.

Implementation of Mechanisms to Collect Information About the Participants

There were three reasons for adopting the self-study process. First, it was anticipated that self study would provide members of the site team with information about their own strengths, interests, and needs related to implementing recommended practices. With that information, the site team would choose a focus for their own site development. This strategy expanded on the research-based adult learning notion that adults are more committed to change and development if they decide their own goals for learning (Epstein, 1993; Stayton & Miller, 1993). Second, the process and resulting information would provide a focus around which team development could occur. Third, it was anticipated that the self-study process would provide the project team with increased information about the project team's interests, strengths, and needs.

Extensive information resulted from the self-study process. One way to bring the information into focus and make it usable, was to adopt Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystem model. This approach has been used by Peck (1993), Salisbury, Palombaro, and Hollowood (1993), Winton, (1990) and others who seek to understand and bring about individual, program, and system change on behalf of young children with disabilities and their families. In adopting this approach, it was possible to recognize which self-study information was associated with the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems of the site. An example of a microsystem is an individual teacher's roles, activities, and relationships. A mesosystem is the arena of interaction between two microsystems. Collaboration is an example of a mesosystem activity. Exosystem examples include the school as a whole, as well as the special education cooperative. Federal funding, and state legislation are macrosystem elements. The ecosystem approach facilitated the selection and implementation of strategies to help individual

participants and the early childhood special education team adopt recommended practices. It also facilitated the development of strategies to address barriers.

Strategies to Support Implementation of Recommended Practices

The strategy identification, selection, and evaluation objective was not completed at the conclusion of the practicum project. Yet, the writer believes that members of the early childhood special education team have begun to expand their implementation of recommended practices of early childhood special education because of their participation in the site development project. The site development approach to inservice education was implemented by the U.A.P. center as a vehicle for strategies that bring about the implementation of recommended practices. The site development approach was developed to incorporate information from the literature on inservice education and adult learning, as well as the knowledge gained by center staff as they provided training and technical assistance. Each element of the site development approach, from the self-identification of early childhood special education teams, to the self-study process, and the implementation of technical assistance strategies in response to collaborative decision making between the recipient and provider, is a strategy to bring about implementation of recommended practices. The site development approach reflects the position statement on early childhood professional development adopted in 1993 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1994). It also incorporates the inservice indicators published in *DEC Recommended Practices* (DEC Task Force on Recommended Practices, 1993). Despite the writer's confidence in the effectiveness of the approach, there are many questions yet to be answered. Such questions address the extent of adoption and

retention of recommended practices, the ability of the approach to incorporate newly identified recommended practices, whether and how much the recommended practices will spread to other programs through the effects of diffusion, and the cost-effectiveness of the site development approach.

Identification of Barriers to Implementation of Recommended Practices

Identification of the barriers to implementation of recommended practices by the site team, was not complete at the conclusion of the practicum. This important component of the site development project was expected to continue during development of the site team's action plan and implementation of training and technical assistance strategies. A number of barriers were identified during the practicum process. Examples include allocation of team members' limited and valuable time among many activities, budgetary constraints, continually changing laws, policies, and programs that must be adopted by administrators, teaching staff, and related services personnel, and changes in the organizational structure of the special education cooperative of the school district. The literature on the development of early childhood special education programs suggests these are common problems (Kontos & File, 1993; Smith & Rose, 1991; Strain & Smith, 1993).

The assumption is often made that effective delivery of high quality inservice education will result in implementation of the knowledge and skills, if an inservice education participant makes every effort to absorb the training. That assumption reflects a perspective based on incomplete knowledge of the intricacies and influence of systems, policies, attitudes, and day-to-day reality. Failure to address barriers will likely produce a failure in the site development effort. Identification and resolution of

the barriers must be addressed while training and technical assistance strategies are being implemented.

Accomplishment of the Goal

Solutions were identified and implemented to accomplish the objectives of a plan. There were also synergistic effects among the solution activities that brought movement toward accomplishing the goal. Despite the number of planned, but incomplete activities for the site development project, there is evidence that the goal of the project will be achieved. That is, the early childhood special education team is increasing their implementation of recommended practices. Three pieces of evidence include:

1. The preschool program did not have an identified curriculum before the project. After the writer shared information with the teacher about the *Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System* (AEPS) curriculum, the principal ordered the curriculum on the teacher's request.
2. The self-study process brought preschool inclusion issues to the awareness of the kindergarten teacher. There have been subsequent discussions between the kindergarten teacher and the preschool teacher about times and activities in which the preschool children could participate.
3. The self-study process prioritized family-centered services as one aspect of their early childhood special education program which they would like to strengthen. As a result, the teacher, teaching assistant, and social worker began collaborating about ways to communicate with parents during the summer vacation. This occurred before a team decision about a focus for the training and technical assistance efforts.

These results are examples of the changes resulting from the site development project. It is expected that the site development project will be considered an effective approach to staff development.

Summary

The development and implementation of this practicum project took place within the ecology of a complex, dynamic system, not a laboratory setting. Many successes, foibles, and unexpected events occurred throughout the project. The problem which this practicum addressed was that gaps existed in the design of a site development project funded by the state D.O.E. The gaps included a need for project planning and identification of effective inservice strategies, a mechanism for gathering information about participants, and an approach for identifying barriers to recommended practices. These gaps were closed as a result of the practicum project. In addition, the implemented solutions became elements of an effective approach to staff development resulting in implementation of recommended practices.

Recommendations

The writer offers the following recommendations to programs that may consider adopting elements of the site development approach:

1. Teams should anticipate a minimum of six months to develop the structures for the project and at least two years for bringing a program up to point of recommended practices.
2. It is recommended that an inservice team present only one project to a school at a time. This will prevent considerable confusion among people

considering the project because they will not have to keep track of two sets of characteristics and activities as they are making a decision about participation.

3. It is important that a team carry out the project rather than a single facilitator. At least one other person needs to be present at group meetings to take notes and notice responses. It is preferable that at least four people do the initial strategic planning for the project to ensure a well-thought-out plan.
4. It is important that the site team recruit parents to participate. It is the best way to ensure that family-centered services are addressed and developed.

Dissemination

Dissemination of information resulting from the practicum project was expected to be quite limited until the first phase of the site development project was completed. At the conclusion of the practicum, the writer had only presented information about site development as an approach to inservice education, to a master's level interdisciplinary studies class offered through the university and the U.A.P. It was anticipated that the project would result in journal articles, presentation at national conferences, and research activities. A copy of the practicum report will be cataloged with the other doctoral dissertations that relate to U.A.P. activities and kept at the U.A.P. library.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Permission to use nonoriginal material provided by Gen Shelton, Coordinator, June 9, 1994.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Introduction

Between March 19 and April 7, 1991 telephone interviews were conducted by the ECP evaluator. Representatives from five sites currently receiving technical assistance from the ( ) were contacted. At least one and usually two persons from each site were asked the following questions:

1. As a participant in the project, can you describe how the technical assistance you have received thus far has been beneficial to you?

2. Are there topics or areas of technical assistance that you would like to see addressed in the future? Do you have any specific areas of need?

3. Are there any changes in the delivery of the technical assistance that you could suggest so as to improve its effectiveness?

4. Have you made any changes in your program as a result of the technical assistance you have received?

For most of the persons interviewed, it was necessary to rephrase the initial question in several ways, frequently replacing the words technical assistance with "help" or "assistance" or "information." In some cases the interviewer asked additional questions to clarify a point made by the respondent.

These interviews elicited many general comments, mostly positive. All but one interviewee responded favorably to the initial question about whether technical assistance had been helpful, even though some couldn't specify what assistance they had received.

Areas of Successful Intervention

The workshops made a big impression; they're one of the first things most interviewees mentioned. People liked the "networking" aspects as well as the content. The Summer Institute was also popular.

As for more traditional kinds of technical assistance, five interviewees said the site visits were helpful. Two indicated that 's staff working directly in the classrooms with the teachers was helpful. Others said they received useful materials or information; one respondent specified four different areas in which information was provided. Others remembered receiving help with particular problems or programs, but didn't always mention the details.

Overall, people liked 's "help" or what we understand to be technical assistance. They appreciate:

1. 's role as a resource-- a center of specialists with access to information that may not be readily available to teachers, who channel information to teachers upon request.

2. 's willingness to visit their programs and work there directly with them.

Here is a breakdown of specifics mentioned in response to each question:

How "technical assistance" helped:
-- networking
-- workshops
-- getting our staff to CEC, Summer Institute
-- site visits
-- information about preschool programming
-- Library and Resource Room
-- changed screening device based on one found through

-- parent folder developed
-- got references for a presentation
-- preschool forum
-- good for networking, knowing what others are doing
-- planning inservice for parents of children leaving preschool
-- teachers benefit from direct work with staff
-- availability of resource materials
-- information on autism

Changes made in programs as a result of technical assistance:
-- changed screening device to one found in Library
-- added parent folder based on Down Syndrome folder

Delivery of services:

None of the interviewees said, in response to the question on delivery that they would like to see changes. One interviewee indicated that at first he or she didn't know for a long time what was supposed to do, which may indicate a problem in educating participants about . This interviewee suggested a meeting to plan topics for the year and disseminate information on a regular basis on such topics as disabilities, legislation, curriculum, etc.

Recommendations:

1. Supply specific information about technical assistance so that respondent can give informed answers.

2. Involve administrators in the technical assistance process so that it has more impact on the program.

3. Send a letter of introduction to site personnel identifying the need for an evaluation of the technical assistance that is strong and clarifies purpose.

4. Use other methods, besides phone survey for gathering data; consider a paper pencil task or follow up by the person providing the technical assistance within several weeks.

Most people were positive about the technical assistance they received even when quite vague about how it helped them. These recommendations were carefully considered and discussed by the staff. Some suggestions were implemented immediately. There were others that will be considered and implemented if appropriate.

APPENDIX B

COLLABORATIVE WORK LAB

From: "VICKI PAPPAS" < /PAPPAS>
To: AFCROSS
Date: Sun, 5 Jun 1994 19:16:22 EST
Subject: Alliance brochure
X-mailer: PMail v3.0 (R1)

Alice --- it's Ok to use a page from the Alliance Brochure for her Practicum. Please send a copy of your report!!!

Good luck!!

. . . VICKI

The Benefits of Collaborative Work Technology at Your Fingertips...The Collaborative Work Lab.

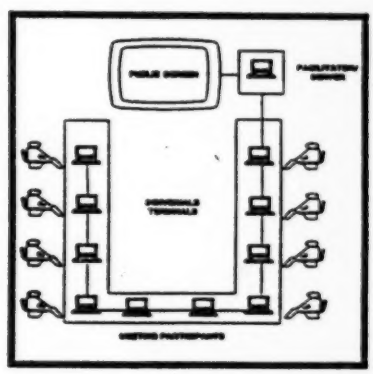
Located at , the **Collaborative Work Lab** is a state-of-the-art group work environment which offers innovative collaborative work technology and skilled professional staff to help your group become more collaborative, more focused, and more effective.

One of the first such facilities in the country, the **Collaborative Work Lab** remains on the forefront of the use of technology to support groups. The collaborative work technology your group can access has been especially-designed and tested over hundreds of sessions to help participants brainstorm, discuss, organize, and select ideas more efficiently.

Electronic meetings in the **Collaborative Work Lab** consist of group members seated around a horseshoe-shaped table in a comfortable environment. There's a color monitor and keyboard in front of each person, and a five-foot public display screen in front of the room. Each person's computer is linked to the others for exchanging and reflecting on information from the group. A skilled facilitator leads your group through a series of tailored steps which are supported by computerized collaborative work tools and designed specifically to achieve your goals. The facilitator also helps guide the group through discussions and decision making activities to ensure that the group remains focused on its objectives.

Further, the collaborative work tools can be customized to support your particular group needs, whether they involve creative planning, decision-making, or negotiation. Some of the common collaborative work tools enable standard activities such as:

- Discussing, developing, and evaluating ideas
- Organizing ideas into logical groupings
- Voting (by rank order, multiple choice, yes/no)
- Evaluating alternatives across multiple criteria (e.g. desirability vs. feasibility)
- Identifying priorities
- Consensus building activities



The **Collaborative Work Lab** also functions as a collaborative work technology resource center. As such, we are familiar with a variety of commercially available state-of-the-art collaborative work technology. Instead of spending a small fortune buying a product only to find it just didn't meet your needs effectively, you can test the appropriateness of a variety of collaborative software for your organization without risk and heavy investment.

The Collaborative Work Lab - [illegible] technical and collaborative work support.

Collaborative Work Technology... Maximum Results.

A variety of research studies have been conducted to examine how teams work when they are supported by collaborative technology. The results indicate that teams undergo a profound, tangible change. The findings show that collaborative work technology:

Enhances Idea Generation and Innovation

Teams using collaborative work technology come up with significantly more ideas than those not using the technology. As the number of ideas generated increases so, too, does the chance that the team will develop a breakthrough idea.

Significantly Decreased Project Completion Time

In studies of organizational groups, analysis of actual to budgeted project plans found a 55 percent reduction in person-hours when teams used collaborative work technology. Further, the calendar time necessary for project completion was reduced by 92 percent.

Increases Satisfaction with the Meeting Process

Collaborative work technology has been found to significantly increase the satisfaction of team members with the meeting process. These results are important, for it has also been found that satisfaction is vital to fostering good team relations and a spirit of cooperation necessary for productivity in future team interactions.

Increases Group Consensus

Members of teams using collaborative work technology have reported a greater sense of responsibility, ownership and commitment toward the end product.

Results in More Evenly Distributed Participation

Domination by one or more members of the team is significantly lessened when the group used collaborative work technology.

Prevents Production Blocking

People often forget what they were going to say while waiting their turn, or they are so busy listening that they are not given a chance to think. The term "production blocking" is often used to refer to these productivity losses. Use of collaborative work technology is shown to dramatically reduce production blocking, enabling team members to contribute significantly more ideas than they could in a traditional meeting.

Citations available upon request.

Collaborative work technology transforms the traditional meeting resulting in significantly enhanced productivity and satisfaction.

APPENDIX C

PLAN FOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

VISION

To collaborate with public school personnel in ways that will result in inclusive classroom and community settings that demonstrate currently recommended practices for young children with disabilities and their families.

VALUES

We believe that:

A multidisciplinary team approach, which includes each person who works with a child, is the best approach to working with young children. Such a team includes teachers, parents, teaching assistants, therapists, community agency personnel, and others.

Each team member, whether parent, site team member, or project team member, is capable of growth and change, and has a right to dignity and respect, as shown by language use, daily interactions, and program decisions.

Each parent has the right to choose their individual level of participation as an active decisionmaker in the early education process.

All children, with and without disabilities, deserve equal opportunities with peers in a wide variety of educational, social, and community experiences.

All early childhood education settings have the potential and creativity to support each child's development toward positive outcomes from his/her education experiences.

Each child has abilities (capacity/potential) to learn, and the right to dignity and respect as shown by our language use, daily interactions, and program decisions.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Site development activities:

Are to have a team focus.

Promote parent involvement, training, and information exchange.

Promote practices that are child- and family-centered, multidisciplinary, and collaborative.

Promote collaboration with community agencies which support the child's education.

Are grounded in research and literature.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project will be to develop an inservice training model that will empower early education teams, through their activities, roles, and relationships, to be dynamic, self-directed learners and change agents who will implement recommended practices of early childhood special education.

1) **Team members** will have the capacity to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate their **individual intervention strategies** to enhance services for young children with or at risk for disabilities and their families.

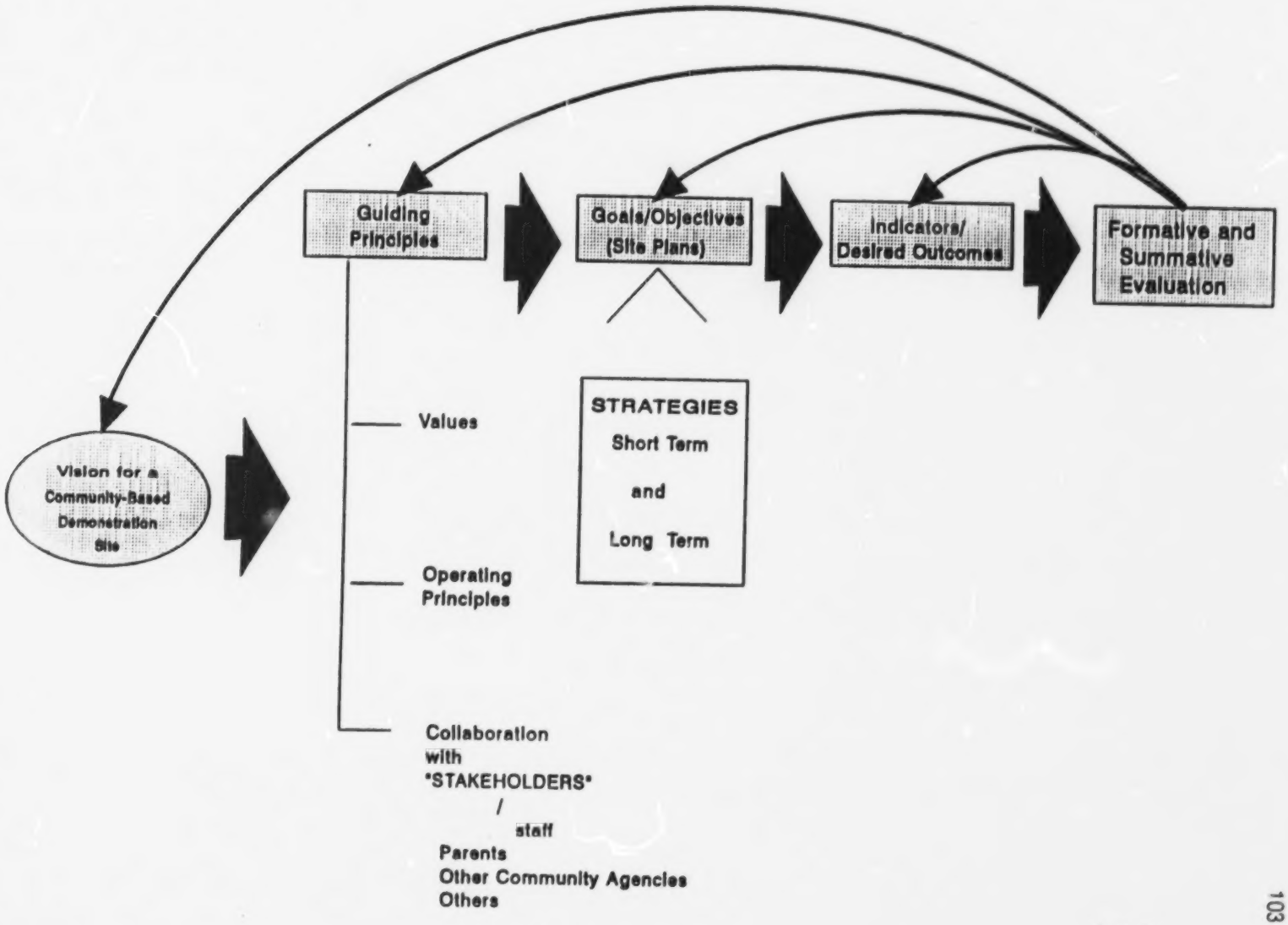
2) **Early education teams** will have the capacity to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate their **team building skills** to strengthen services for young children with or at risk for disabilities and their families.

3) **Early education teams** will have the capacity to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate their **organizational structures and processes** to strengthen their early education program.

4) The **values of inclusion, family-centeredness, cultural diversity, and developmentally appropriate practice** will permeate the early education program.

Major Activities	Timeline
Identify which school will have a team for the P P Program and confirm team members	February 1 - 18, 1994
Participate in team building activities and develop project philosophy or mission statement	February 18 - March 18, 1994
Implement self-study activities by considering program practices according to current issues, trends, professional standards, recommended practices and legal standards such as Part B rules	March 18 - April 18, 1994
Identify and prioritize content areas and practices that will be addressed in the action plan	April 18 - May 18, 1994
Develop action plan with goals, objectives, activities, and the preferred methods, format, and pace of activities	April 18 - May 18, 1994
Participate in training and technical assistance activities	May 18 - October 30, 1994
Develop plans and roles for providing observation opportunities	November 1 - 30, 1994
Provide opportunities for teaching staff, related services personnel, and families to observe implementation of recommended practices	December 1 - June 30, 1995

2/3/94


Guiding Principles
Goals/Objectives (Site Plans)
Indicators/ Desired Outcomes
Formative and Summative Evaluation
Vision for a Community-Based Demonstration Site
Values
Operating Principles
Collaboration with "STAKEHOLDERS"
/
staff
Parents
Other Community Agencies
Others
STRATEGIES
Short Term
and
Long Term

APPENDIX D

STRATEGY SELECTION PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTING FORMS

DRAFT

STRATEGY SELECTION PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTING FORMS

1. The team member's topic of interest is noted in the site coordinator's log.

   Purpose: Tracks the interests of team members to facilitate planning for training and technical assistance.

2. The site coordinator sends a brief letter (example 1) to the team member, noting both the topic and the context in which it came up. Included with the letter is the Interest Form (example 2) and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

   Purpose: Acknowledges team member's interests, initiates a response to her needs, and ensures the coordinator's timely response.

3. The team member completes the Interest Form (example 2), indicating whether additional information about the topic is desired and if so, in what format. The form is mailed or returned to the site coordinator.

   Purpose: Reflects team member's level of interest in a topic and may initiate planning for a training or technical assistance activity.

4. If the Interest Form (example 2) shows a request for additional information, the site coordinator makes contact with the team member to collaborate about the next steps.

   Purpose: Starts the planning process.

5. The team member and site coordinator collaborate to develop a plan for a training or technical assistance activity. They complete the Planning Form - part a (example 3) which describes the next steps to be taken.

   Purpose: Documents the plans for the activity and notes the reasons a training or technical assistance strategy was selected.

6. Following the activity, the coordinator or center team member completes Planning Form - part b (example 3) describing what was implemented.

   Purpose: Notes the activity and outcome of what actually took place, which may be different than what was planned.

7. Two weeks after the training activity the site coordinator contacts the team member to receive feedback and answer questions. Coordinator completes Planning Form - part c (example 3) with the date of the follow-up contact, whether additional activities are desired. If so, another Planning Form is initiated.

   Purpose: Responds to questions that may have arisen about the activity and facilitates planning of further training and technical assistance activities.

DRAFT

DRAFT

EXAMPLE 1 - RESPONSE LETTER

May 5, 1994

Dear ,

The topic of strategies for collaborative planning came up in our conversation on Friday, April 29, 1994. I have included a copy of the article we discussed.

Please complete the attached Interest Form and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope. I will give you a call or stop by to make plans if you want further information.

Thanks,

Alice Cross
Site Coordinator

DRAFT

EXAMPLE 2

INTEREST FORM

Please complete and return this form to let us know your interests. We will contact you to collaborate about plans.

Date: _____

Team Member: _____

Topic: _____

Please respond:

___ Yes, I would like further information.

___ No, I do not need further information at this time.

Indicate the format that you would like for receiving the information.

___ In-depth conversation

___ Facilitated discussion during a meeting

___ Articles, books, or video materials

___ Classroom observation and feedback

___ Demonstration or modeling

___ Facilitated problem-solving

___ Observation of peer's practice

___ Networking with peers

___ Other

DRAFT

DRAFT

Example 3

PLANNING FORM FOR TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Part a - WHAT IS THE PLAN? Date: _____

What is the focus?

Who will attend?

Who will provide the training?

Where will it take place

When will it take place?

What will take place?

Why was that strategy chosen?

DRAFT

STRATEGY SELECTION PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTING FORMS

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   Purpose: Starts the planning process.

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   Purpose: Documents the plans for the activity and notes the reasons a training or technical assistance strategy was selected.

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   Purpose: Responds to questions that may have arisen about the activity and facilitates planning of further training and technical assistance activities.

DRAFT

APPENDIX E

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

Identified Barriers to Implementing Recommended Practices

The following barriers to implementing recommended practices have been identified within the early childhood special education setting:

1. Allocation of team members' limited and valuable time among many activities
2. Budgetary constraints related to classroom supplies and activities
3. Changes in funding from the state D.O.E.
4. Changes in the organizational structure of the special education cooperative
5. Beliefs and perceptions regarding inclusive settings for young children
6. Beliefs and perceptions about the ways young children learn
7. Beliefs and perceptions regarding family participation in schools
8. Interactions between members of team

APPENDIX F

PRINT-OUT FROM COLLABORATIVE WORK LAB

Group Writer Report
Session: - Values Date: 10/07/1993 10:38am

Document: value

>> Idea Organization Report
>> 10/07/1993, 10:37am, 28

We believe that:

A multidisciplinary team approach, which includes each person who works with a child (e.g., teachers, parents, teaching assistants, therapists, community agency personnel), is the best approach to working with young children.

Each team member, whether parent, site team member, or project team member is capable of growth and change, and has the right to dignity and respect, as shown by language use, daily interactions and program decisions.

Each parent has the right to choose their individual level of participation as an active decision maker in the early childhood education process.

All children, with and without disabilities, deserve equal opportunities with peers in a wide variety of educational, social, and community experiences.

All early childhood education settings have the potential and creativity to support each child's development toward positive outcomes from his/her individual education experiences.

Each child has abilities, (capacity/potential) to learn, and the right to dignity and respect as shown by our language use, daily interactions, and program decisions.

---------- - Operating Principles - 10/7/93 ----------

Idea Organization Report
Session: /Operating Principles Date: 10/07/1993 11:59am

---

1. ******TEAMS AND TEAM MEMBERS/COLLABORATION********

2. Site development activities are to have a team focus.

++
Each t.m. is to be supported as a self-directed problem-solver & deci
---
problem solver, and afforded dignity of risk. Each team member, whether a parent, site team member, or project team member ..... (acknowledged as, provided opportunities to be)

foster open communication among team members
---
model respect for team members and children

++

3. ******FAMILIES*******

4. s.d.a. promote parent involvement/training/information exchange

encourage sharing of information
two way street of sharing
training is on an individualized basis
parents as trainers also

Involvement - on the team
- site development

++
utilize parents in all phases of site development

Promote choices for families and foster parental right to choice
---
promote parental involvement on the team
---
promote parent understanding of early childhood sp.ed.

++

5. ******CHILD******

6. S.d.a. promote practices that are child- & family-centered, multidiscip

---

---------- - Operating Principles - 10/7/93 ----------

multidisciplinary, and collaborative

++
Promote development of the whole child.
----
model recognition of abilities of all children
---------- ----------
see abilities rather than disabilities in all kids

model inclusive language and interactions with children and adults
----
++

7. ******SITE ACTIVITIES/SETTINGS/ENVIRONMENTS******

8. S.d.a are grounded in research & literature.

that is, recommended practices.

++
Site activities are to facilitate adoption of recommended practices.
----
the innovation (recommended practices, facilitating each child's development toward positive outcomes fropm his/her individual education experiences.

Accept classrooms where they are on the inclusion/whatever continuum
----
Site activities are to recognize children learn with people & settings
----
promote practices that include transition plans (into/out)
----
promote practices that include integrated therapy
----
promote learning potentials in a variety of settings
----
help others see how all settings can offer learning opportunities for the children and not just "school" settings

promote peer involvement in activities

++

9. S.d.a promotes collab w/community agencies which support the child's ed

---------- End Report ----------
Date: 10/07/1993 Time: 11:59am Page: 2
Report name: (IO) /Operating Principles
Source filename: F:\GROUPSYS\SAVELAST\R_2_1.IO

APPENDIX G

COMPARISON OF SITE DEVELOPMENT TIME LINES

Comparison of Proposed and Actual Times of Site Development Activities

Major Activities	Timeline
Identify which school will have a team for the P P Program and confirm team members	Proposed: February 1 - 18, 1994 Completed: February 23, 1994
Participate in team building activities and develop project philosophy or mission statement	Proposed: February 18 - March 18, 1994 Completed: Activity revised
Implement self-study activities by considering program practices according to current issues, trends, professional standards, recommended practices and legal standards such as Part B rules	Proposed: March 18 - April 18, 1994 Initiated: April 8, 1994
Identify and prioritize content areas and practices that will be addressed in the action plan	Proposed: April 18 - May 18, 1994 Initiated: May 13, 1994
Develop action plan with goals, objectives, activities, and the preferred methods, format, and pace of activities	Proposed: April 18 - May 18, 1994 Completed: Incomplete
Participate in training and technical assistance activities	Proposed: May 18 - October 30, 1994 Initiated: April 1, 1994
Develop plans and roles for providing observation opportunities to peers	Proposed: November 1 - 30, 1994 Completed: Incomplete
Provide opportunities for teaching staff, related services personnel, and families to observe implementation of recommended practices	Proposed: December 1 - June 30, 1995 Completed: Incomplete

APPENDIX H

EXAMPLE OF A SITE LOG ENTRY

Staff Meeting

5/23/94 1:00 - 3:00

Attendance: D., S., T., N., B., H.

Purpose of the meeting - Debrief about the 5/13/94 meeting with the site team

H. opened meeting with feedback, concerns and questions. B. thought questions could divided into two categories - what are our next steps, and what will we do different next time? What we have to do is decide our next steps, we also need to keep track of what we think about changing next time.

Feedback -

H. reported that R. had said she ran into two project people at the site. She had asked them how it went and they had said "Tedious."

B. connected with L. and M. on her way out after the site meeting. They were in L.'s room at work on developing an IEP. L. and M. again expressed their concern regarding the need to work on Child Find. B. said that if the group didn't identify Child Find as a concern that a smaller group could address the issue. She also encouraged them to bring up the topic again as many times as they felt it was needed, that they could be persuasive.

Project team concerns related to the substantial uncertainty that was felt and observed in both site and project teams, surrounding the decision-making process. L. had proposed discussing each item or each area. H. had suggested trying to narrow the focus to one topic. W. agreed. Other comments were made and B. had offered a variety of options (too many?). Issues related to time availability were discussed (the end of the school year, beginning of the summer school, individual vacations, etc.) Eventually V. had proposed a date and a process.

Concerns from D. and N.- too much data for nondata people, too much flipping back and forth between pages of report and pages of study, page numbering needed for self-study document, too long, and still no clear answer of what area they want to focus on. (This was supposed to produce a clear answer wasn't it?)

Question - should they all receive the raw data or only those who want it? It was given to make sure everyone had access to the data. They could decide if they didn't want to look at it. B. didn't want to assume no one would want it.

Question - could the report be written in a different way such as results for each practice written in the columns for each practice. B. thought that results for each practice could be printed on the page next time. (Prior to next session - The practices that were ranked high could be printed out with their results).

B. said these concerns and feelings were characteristic of the "storming stage" of development.

S. commented that it appeared the participants were not yet a team and the difficulty of decision making if they were not a team. Discussion about possible team development process. B. thought it could take place as result of the site development process and the next step of discussion would beginning the next step of these efforts. The discussion of components and practice would provide a knowledge base and the decision would evolve. (Of course it might not - then what?)

S. commented about the decision making process and the fact that V. was the decision maker. B. asked if we need to present this discussion to the SES team? Most people thought that a direct comment about principal power should not be done directly. Options were discussed such as majority voting, multi-voting, recommendations from a small group. B. asked if it might be possible to separate the time, personnel, etc. of the decision from the focus area decision?

H. brought up the need to get something accomplished as a result of this meeting. We talked about addressing the need for statements of philosophy, inclusion, family-centered practice. T. commented that completing statements of philosophy and inclusion would take a lot of effort.

D. and S. suggested using an approach in which SES team would answer questions about each component addressed in the self study would help them build a common knowledge base. Examples of questions include: what is this component?, why is it important?, what component practices are we implementing?, what do we need to be doing?

We developed a tentative plan for the next work session:

We decided to address the components starting with family-centered practices, inclusion, and personnel.

We will prepare copies of the law, as well as information from DEC and NAEYC that relate to those components.

We will suggest that a few brief sentences be developed by the group to encapsulate the purpose and current status of each component.

We will work to complete those three topics in this next work session.

Members of the SES team will be asked if they would want to participate in small work sessions over the summer to complete the process for each component. In the fall team members would present this information to each other to finalize the focus.
A plan of action would be developed during two early fall work sessions and training activities would take place over the school year.

We would like to begin the training activities by mid October.